

Hillandale News



No. 227, Autumn 1999

NEWS FROM THE CLPGS BOOKSHOP

Wells-next-the Sea, Norfolk;

NR23 1RD.

Telephone and Fax:

There are very limited supplies, now, of "Tinfoil to Stereo" and "Fascinating Rhythm" - previous announcements give catalogue numbers and cost. We will receive *circa* late July copies of the long-awaited Columbia Phonograph Companion, volume 1, dealing with what we British call Phonographs. We will also receive a small number of the Phonograph Companion, volume 2 - dealing with disc machines - and the Dethlefsen "Edison Blue Amberol Recordings", all of which remain listed in the Bookshop.

Would any Member who contacted Roger Thorne in respect of the reprint of his privately published "Jumbo" listing, please now contact me at the above address, so that I can ascertain just how many copies need to be made. Any cheques need to be made payable to me, George Woolford, as this listing is not an official Society publication.

FASCINATING RHYTHM - Peter Cliffe. Special purchase in hardback. 280 pages filled with monochrome illustrations of the stars which made those dance tunes so popular between the two wars. Issued as item BD-39, cost of £5-00 per copy plus postage.

THE E.M.G. STORY - Francis James. The E.M.G. Story tells for the very first time how E. M. Ginn, once an assistant fish and poultry salesman came to found a firm whose goal was simply to build the best gramophones in the world; how, despite myriad tribulations he succeeded, only to lose his firm to his associates. It is also the story of the little-known early English gramophone pioneers; how their

gentlemanly cooperation turned soon enough into bitter disputes, litigation and trade wars. It is the story of how the gramophone was transformed from a mass-produced clockwork novelty into an instrument made and tuned by hand of such impeccable quality that no self-respecting composer, music critic or connoisseur would have anything else. Lavishly illustrated with many advertisements and photographs of the period (1916-1980) and with appendices which tabulate the technical details of every model of English handmade gramophones, the E.M.G. Story can genuinely be said to be the very first chapter of High Fidelity reproduction. In hardback, 144 pages, over 100 illustrations. Issued as item BD-41, cost of £15-00 per copy plus postage.

DATE ALL THOSE ENGLISH 78s - Pt. 1 - Commercial: Eddie Shaw. Further to previous announcements here, this is an updated official Society Publication, as authorised by the compiler. Issued as 40 A4 sheets with clear plastic cover and slide spine binding. Issued as item CL-26, cost of £7-50 per copy plus postage.

BEKA Double Sided Records - a listing dating probably from just before the Great War, and including the then newly introduced "12" Meister Records". Many quality Band, Orchestral, Instrumental and Vocal records are listed, including many Music Hall artists, some of which are illustrated. Issued as item CL-31, cost of £3 per copy plus postage.

SOCIETA ITALIANA DI FONOTIPIA - Reproduction of an original 12½" x 7½"

Continued on Inside Rear Cover

Hillandale News

The Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited
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Issue no. 227 - Autumn 1999

CLPGS Ltd.

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Editors' Desk

Readers will note that correspondence from Members features rather more than usual in this issue. The Chairman's column, having generated a degree of heat, particularly on the burning issue of a Membership List, has been balanced by a Chairman's Forum, where Members can have their say.

The 'Whither CLPGS?' debate also continues with one or two thoughtful contributions, as well as a suggestion (not published) from one Member that one of our more controversial correspondents is an invention of the Editors' imaginations, a vehicle for making outrageous remarks designed to provoke a continuous supply of correspondence. Whilst we envy our correspondent's own fertile imagination, we can reassure Members that said correspondent is as much flesh and blood as the rest of us.

Similarly, the number of requests for assistance from Members, covering everything from repairs to research, seemed to justify having a separate Help Wanted column. Other correspondence is in the usual Letters column.

The 80th Anniversary Meeting, which took place in London on the 18th May 1999, is fully reported in this issue. And to counter-balance this acknowledgement of the Society's past, we also have a note about the Society's Web page.

In order to make room for Members' thoughts and inquiries, we have held over the next instalment of Frank Andrews' continuing series of 'We Also Have Our Own Records' until a later issue. To those readers awaiting the next piece in this jigsaw, our apologies and an assurance that the publication of this important historical documentation of the record industry has not been abandoned.

By the time you read this, there should have been a decision at the AGM on the Membership List question. It is to be hoped that that decision will take full account of the requirements of the Data Protection Act. On the related question of what people will use it for, if published, we have been gratified to see at least some stirrings in the 'Annual Event' category of activities.

If some Members are able to organise a Local Event around the Phonograph and Gramophone theme, the Society may eventually have to take a view on which of these it wishes to support, and which not. Support can of course, take on a number of guises, and we're not suggesting finance. But there is a range of possibilities, including a Calendar of Events in HILLANDALE NEWS and on the Web page, through to physical items such as a CLPGS banner, with all the organisational implications!

Please note that material intended for inclusion in HILLANDALE NEWS must reach the Editorial Group not less than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**. Hence, the deadline for the Winter 1999/2000 issue will be the 13th November 1999. Copyright on all articles in HILLANDALE NEWS remains the property of the authors. Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Group.

Chairman's Chat

I have just received a letter from Lyndsey Drummond, secretary to the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand, enclosing a copy of their journal - 'The Phonographic Record'. I already knew that New Zealand had a strong machine-collecting fraternity, and it is quite amazing to me how much material was bought by the relatively tiny population of that country before the First World War. The magazine refers to their Society's links with Australian collectors across the water, where New South Wales has a particularly strong collecting contingent. However far they may have been from Hayes or West Orange, the populations in those places knew what they wanted and had the money to buy the best from the Old World.

Having collected and dealt for nearly thirty years, I have long been aware of how simple geography and differing degrees of prosperity in different parts of Britain in the past has inevitably affected the distribution of items to be found today. When I began in the early 1970s, I was living in Exeter and travelling the country for my work. It immediately became apparent that Devon, however beautiful a place to live in, was no match for the Big Four sources for me - Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield - cities which were booming just after the turn of the century. Liverpool, of course, had the added advantage of being the port through which machines from America arrived in the North, and Jake Graham, the main Edison dealer there, consequently had a huge business. T. Edens Osborne had a seemingly near-monopoly in Belfast. Today, I believe, we remember Belfast-the-port more for its tradition of liner-building rather than its importance as a major trading hub.

Readers will no doubt be aware that American Victor products were not licensed for sale in Britain. How then, did so many big Victor cabinet gramophones find their way here, but so few horn machines? The answer is that when transatlantic liners were broken up or refitted in Britain, the old contents were sold off, with the ships' officers given first refusal. The service life of a liner was rarely more than twenty years, and when you think about it that spans two generations of gramophone technology. In the past I have bought a number of Victors privately - from Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton, and in each case, there was a Cunard or White Star man in the family tree!

Fashions in retirement also have their part to play. Bognor Regis and Penzance have both lost the draw which they enjoyed fifty years ago. In the latter case, rich possessions were transported into what has always been a poor landscape. EMGs appear there with surprising regularity - or not surprising, if you know how they most likely got there. I have no experience of Northern retirement spots, but English collectors have long been aware of the riches of Bournemouth and Poole, both of which continue to attract retirement money.

More than one lowland Scots collector has told me how Glasgow, despite its blue-collar reputation is nevertheless a better source of good records than the supposedly 'refined' Edinburgh, despite being only an hour apart.

So, if your friend always seems to have better luck junking than you - sorry, but you may just not be living in the right place.

Howard Hope

The Concert Machines

Part 3 - The Edison Concert

by Mike Field

As discussed in Part 1 of this series, the appearance of the Columbia Grand machine and the successful Columbia lawsuit against Hawthorn and Sheble for alleged infringement of the Macdonald patent, forced Edison to put his own version of a 5-inch cylinder machine on the market. This was the Edison Grand Concert Phonograph and was first offered in February 1899. Note that the name "Concert" was applied to three Edison models over the years - the 5-inch machines, the 1911 machine renamed the Opera in 1912, and the Amberola 1.

The mechanism of the 5-inch Concert machine was fundamentally the same throughout its lifetime, but the cabinet appeared in three versions. The first version was supplied in the same case as the Spring Motor Triumph which was made from oak with a small drawer at the front. Figure 1 shows an early advertisement for the machine as factored by the Edison-Bell Consolidated Phonograph Company. It is interesting to see that the advertising fraternity was just as clever (i.e., devious) at that time because, at first glance, it seems that the Concert was being offered at £2.2s.0d! However, that price must refer to the 'really good family machine' which would be the Edison-Bell Gem. The price

of the Concert on introduction into the UK is not clear, but by 1903 it was £15 15s 0d.

EDISON'S LATEST & GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT.

The **CONCERT**
Phonograph.



THE WONDER OF THE AGE.
The Voice Reproduced
LOUD as a man can SING
Every Word Clear & Distinct.

The extraordinary power of this Machine is such that **ORCHESTRAL SELECTIONS, VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS**, can be clearly and distinctly heard throughout the largest Salons.
Every Home will sooner or later have a Phonograph as a necessity.

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YOU WILL ENJOY IT LONGER.

Edison has produced a really good Family Machine at the low price of **£2 2s.**, so that they are now within the reach of all.
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Or EDISONIA, Ltd., BANNER ST., E.C. City Office—20 & 21. CHEAPSIDE, E.C.

LONDON.

Figure 1. Advertisement for the Edison Concert Phonograph, circa 1899. Reproduced with the permission of Alec Brown.

The top works were essentially the same as those of the Edison Spring Motor, later the Triumph, except that the casting and end gate was enlarged to accommodate the

larger cylinder mandrel and the driven pulley was larger. The reproducer, originally the Edison Automatic and then the Model "D" from early 1902, was mounted horizontally. The powerful three spring Triton motor (Figure 2) was the same as that fitted to the Spring Motor Triumph machines which could play at least six of the Concert cylinders at one winding. This motor is very well engineered with hardened steel bearings, engineering (involute) gearing and a massive triple spring barrel. The springs are two inches wide and one thirty-second of an inch thick! You need strong hands to replace one. Perhaps in recognition of the strength of the spring, the winding handle is unique for Edison machines in having a square socket instead of a thread or slot. As a tribute to its excellence, the motor underwent detail modifications but remained fundamentally unchanged during its lifetime. A shaving device was provided

throughout the production as all Edison Concert cylinders were made from brown wax and none were produced by the moulding process.

In early February 1901, the Concert was rehoused in the "New Style" cabinet (see cover picture) and instead of the all-enveloping style, the cover followed the then-established system in which it 'sat' on the top hinged frame and was secured by hinged metal clips. A handsome banner transfer appeared on the front of the case with the words 'Edison Concert Phonograph'. In 1906, the case style changed again and now followed the style of the contemporary Edison Triumph. The banner was replaced by a single 'Edison' transfer. When it was introduced in 1899, the main use appears to be for concert hall work and would have been sold with the 24-inch horn and stand as shown in Figure 1. In later versions, this horn and stand were

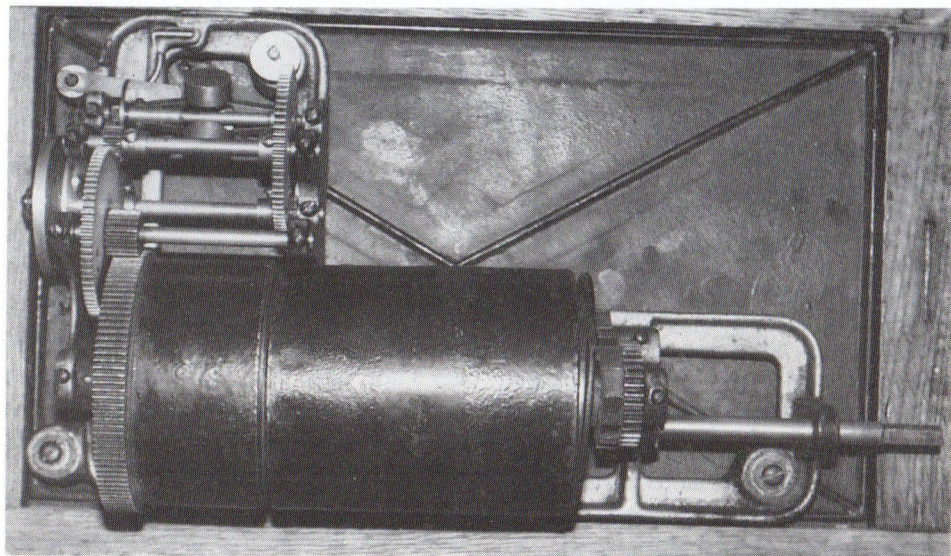


Figure 2. The Triton Motor.

still available but other horns could be supplied.

The machine was not offered for long in 1906 as a catalogue item although it *may* have been available on special order in later years. In the UK, concert cylinders were no longer available from 1908, but owners did not have to scrap their expensive machines. A special carrier arm, mainshaft and standard mandrel were made available so that the standard size cylinders could be played using a Model C (or D) reproducer. Figure 3 shows the carrier arm supplied with the modification kit. With the advent of the 4-minute Amberols, an attachment was offered to convert the Concert to play them. Originally the reproducer was the rarely seen Model J.

The O reproducer was offered later, and even as late as 1913, combination outfits were being offered with the Diamond B reproducer.⁽¹⁾ For example, see illustration on page 253 of Chris Proudfoot's article in HILLANDALE NEWS, no. 225, Spring 1999.

The Edison Concert was a worthy rival to the Graphophone Grand and was well engineered. Its only drawback is that the feedscrew is cut at 100 threads per inch, making the condition of the thread, both on the leadscrew and the feed nut(s), vulnerable to damage and wrong adjustment. That criticism aside, it is a fine machine, and if weight is any criterion, it is superb as it weighs between 50 and 60 pounds!

(1) The Edison Cylinder Phonographs, 1877-1929, by George L. Frow and Albert F. Seff.



Figure 3. The 2-inch cylinder carrier arm.

The Mechanics of Soundboxes

by Peter Heath

Introduction

Arising from the recent fortunate find of a near-perfect 1929 HMV Model 103, came the need to replace the aluminium foil diaphragm of the no. 5A soundbox. It soon became apparent that few original diaphragms have survived in good condition, and so attention was turned to making a replacement.

The originals may have been pressed using matching die sets, but this possibility was dismissed as a means of manufacture as being too expensive and unable to guarantee a good result. The basic shape would be much easier to form by slowly spinning the foil over a single die and applying localised pressure, with the complex contours of the outer stiffening ring being obtained by the use of a press die set afterwards.

The 5a diaphragm (and the no. 5) both have a complex spiral fluted pattern for the outer ring, but the final no. 5b simply had a series of diamond shapes. These could be replaced by circular dimples which are easily made and the resulting new diaphragm would perform similarly.

The contours of the inside of the soundbox backplate were an exact image of the original diaphragm shape, and after some experimental and development work, a diaphragm was successfully made from aluminium foil of thickness 0.0025 inch. The load-spreading spider was refitted and the soundbox reassembled, and will be referred

to as the "modified 5a" or "5a (M)" hereafter. HMV used 0.002 inch foil and there was uncertainty about alloying or the degree of work hardness in both diaphragms. It was therefore decided to measure diaphragm displacement relative to needle tip lateral force by applying test loadings as a means of comparison with a perfect no. 5b soundbox.

Displacement Tests.

A test rig was built to observe the displacements, and the general arrangement is shown in Figure 1.

The combined downward force due to the dial gauge and the weight of the test bar is 100 gm., and the fixed load of 50 gm. balances this out so that the system is at rest.

Weights were then applied to the test points in multiples of 17 gm. upto 85 gm. and the displacements noted. There was a small amount of "sticktion" in the system but this was overcome by lightly tapping the test bar three times during and after each test to produce consistent results.

We used good quality HMV soundboxes, nos. 4, 5, 5b, a Columbia no. 9, as well as the modified 5a, and they were all tested upto 85 gm. of load. Graphs were plotted of the full range from +85 gm. to -85 gm. The positive and negative displacements were rarely of equal value for similar loads. Variations were typically between 15% and 30% for a needle load of about 100 gm.

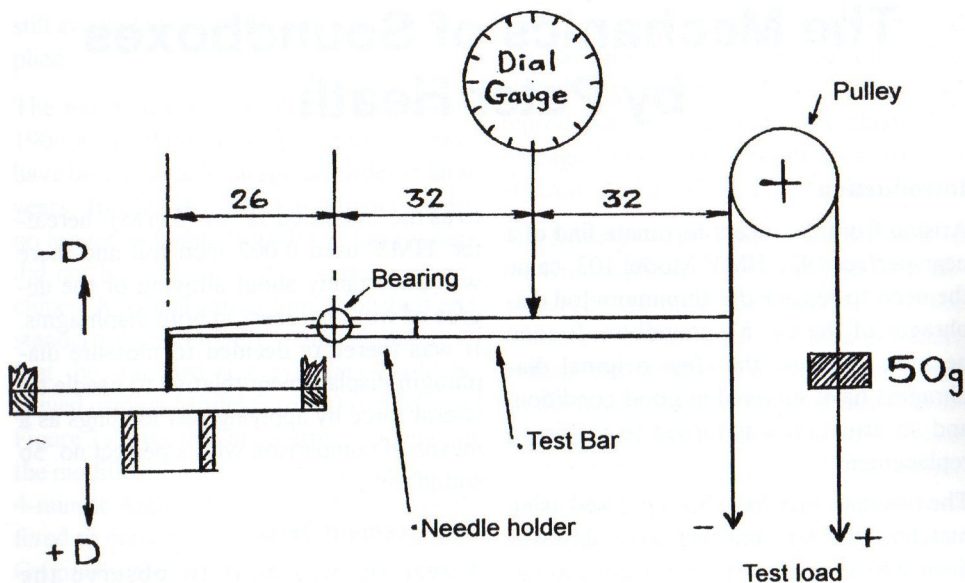


Figure 1. Diagram of the Deflection Test Rig.

and the modified 5a scored 50%. These differences are almost certainly caused by felt or rubber ring gasket seals which press on one side only but the shape of foil diaphragms may also be a factor.

The peak-to-peak displacement is the sum of negative and positive responses and these were plotted on a single sheet of graph paper, as shown in Figure 2.

Average responses over the needle tip load range 0-100 gm. were calculated in gm. per mm. for each diaphragm to obtain the relationship between load and displacement. The term "Ls" will be used for Load since it overcomes diaphragm stiffness to produce Displacement "D" from the rest position. The results were -

Columbia no. 9:	Ls = 1029D
HMV no. 5b:	Ls = 766D
HMV no. 5a (M):	Ls = 1272D

HMV no. 5:	Ls = 637D
HMV no. 4:	Ls = 847D

Comparison of the stiffness of the modified 5a with that of the 5 and 5b is of special interest. The only major difference is in diaphragm thickness with the 5a (M) being 0.0025 inch and the other two being 0.0005 inch less.

Reference to a handbook of mechanical stress formulas reveals that for a flat disc rigidly supported at its edges and having a single centre point load, the deflection at the centre is proportional to -

$$\frac{LR^2}{T^3}$$

where L is Load, R is Radius, and T is Thickness.

The increase in thickness from 0.002 to 0.0025 inch will therefore increase stiffness

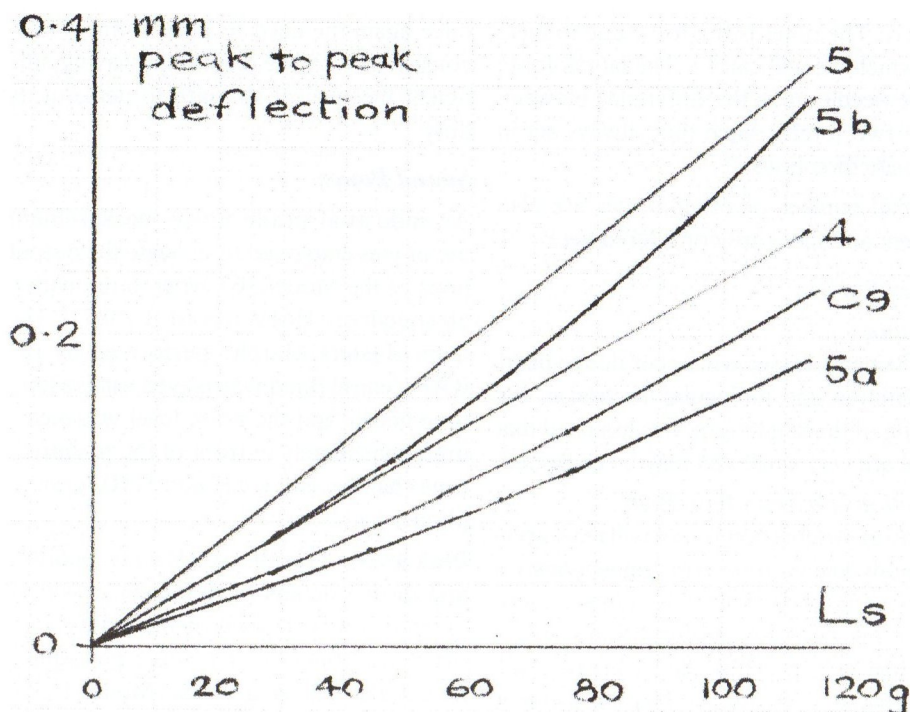


Figure 2. Test Rig Results

by the cube of the ratio 1.25:1. The cube of 1.25 is 1.953, and the agreement between this figure and the test results can clearly be seen, particularly by comparing the results for the modified HMV no. 5a soundbox with those for the other HMV soundboxes. Care should be taken in selecting materials for new diaphragms; small increases in thickness produce relatively large changes in stiffness. Moreover, the stiffer the diaphragm, the greater the record wear.

An advantage of load testing is that it removes the need to analyse the alloy content of materials or their degree of work hardness: if the measured stiffness conforms to the original, then authenticity is guaran-

teed.

By the use of adaptors, all of the soundboxes were then played on the 163 using a good quality HMV music recording. On the basis of subjective judgement they appeared to be equally loud, with the lowest quality sound coming from the no. 4 soundbox, which has a mica diaphragm. It was arguable that the Columbia was slightly better than its HMV equivalents. That there was no detectable difference between soundboxes of widely differing stiffnesses was something of a surprise, so it was decided to extend the tests and examine the system dynamics.

Moving System Dynamics

There are two major forces acting on the needle. One is the Load L_s , discussed pre-

viously. The other is the force due to inertia, which we will call *Li*. The lateral force at the needle tip is the difference between these two forces, since they always act in opposite directions.

A small number of other forces are also present and these are considered here.

Other Forces

Friction

Small energy losses will occur due to bearing friction and molecular friction in the flexing of the diaphragm. It is assumed that these are very small and may be neglected.

Reactions on Soundbox Body

Diaphragm deflection forces will react upon the body and its tone arm connections via the bearing arms, but there will be a counter-action due to inertial imbalance in the moving system. This occurs because the effective mass above the bearing includes the diaphragm and will therefore exceed the value of the needle and its holder which are below.

An estimation has indicated that at about 775 Hz. the reaction force on the Columbia no. 9 would be zero, since at this frequency the forces of deflection and imbalance are of equal and opposite values.

At 2000 Hz., the average force of reaction would be about 22 gm., but since the combined weight of the soundbox and tone arm is around 300 gm. the effect would be of little significance.

At low frequencies the effects of diaphragm stiffness become dominant and the maximum reaction at 200 Hz. would be about 96 gm. This figure illustrates the reason for soundboxes being heavy - few seem to weigh less than 150 gm. It also emphasises

once again the need to keep stiffness low, consistent with the diaphragm having sufficient mechanical strength to perform its duty.

Sound Power

An industrial grade noise measurement meter was employed to indicate the output level of the Model 163 when fitted with a 5b soundbox. HMV record B.10877 "The Dam Busters March" performed by the RAF Central Band was played using a loud tone needle and the noise level was measured immediately in front of the re-entrant tone chamber exit (only non-HMV gramophones had horns!)

Peak levels of about 110 dB were recorded and further details of the readings will be given towards the end of this article. 110 dB corresponds to 0.1 watts per square metre: the exit area of the Model 163 is 0.27 sq.m., so the output would be 0.027 watts.

In practical terms this power level would occur when the diaphragm deflection is 0.1 mm. at a frequency of 466 Hz., to produce an average additional force at the needle tip of about 19 gm.

In practice, typical sound powers ranged from 97-103 dB, and at a level of 100 dB the force at the needle tip would be reduced by 90%. Compared to the forces required to overcome stiffness and inertia, the force required to produce the music is of little significance.

Needles and Grooves

Before proceeding to the closing sections, it is worth taking a look at the place where the action begins. A good quality Decca record containing some loud passages and

cut at 80 grooves per inch was broken into pieces for examination and a laboratory grade microscope was used to look at broken edges, playing surfaces and composition. A loud tone needle was also viewed seated in a groove at 100x magnification, and the cross-section is shown in Figure 3.

In order that grooves do not overlap, the maximum peak-to-peak value of the wave path must not exceed 0.008 inch. Scanning over loud passage areas indicated a maximum value of about 0.006 inch in a few isolated areas. On the three soundboxes included in the inertia study, this would give a D value of 0.1 mm., so this could be regarded as a maximum.

Loud tone needles fitted precisely into the grooves with what appeared to be a small gap at the bottom.

New needles appeared to be perfectly rounded, although some looked slightly flat at the tip. After playing one record the wear

on opposite sides indicated clearly where the lateral forces had been applied.

HMV loud tone needles are very hard and cannot be cut with a High Speed Steel blade, so the record material must contain some materials of a hard and abrasive nature.

A small pulley was clamped to the side of the Model 163 level with the soundbox and a cord attached to the needle holder and over the pulley. Weights were then attached to the cord while a good quality HMV military band record was being played, until the system was just stable. This occurred at 115 gm. during quiet passages, but when the music became louder, the needle left the groove. The test was repeated several times, always with the same result. The weight due to gravity at the needle tip of the 163 with a 5a soundbox was measured at 205 gm.

The pulley was refitted above the turntable and weights added to lift the soundbox. At 50 gm., the bass notes were affected and sound quality fell up to 165 gm. of applied

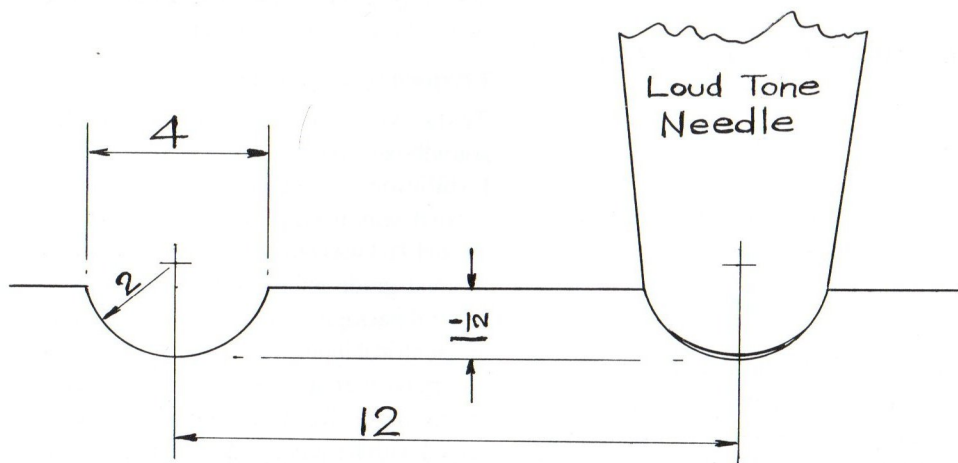


Figure 3. Typical Groove Detail in inches $\times 10^{-3}$ (i.e., thousandths)

load, at which the system was again just stable during quiet passages. Louder music dislodged the needle from the groove, although it always fell back.

From a consideration of the groove and needle dimensions, and the experimental data, it was decided to set a maximum lateral needle tip force of 100 gm., and this will be used in the final calculations.

Comparison of Soundboxes

As a method of comparing the mechanical performance of the Modified 5a soundbox with the 5b and the Columbia no. 9, the frequency spans were calculated which were able to comply with set limits of deflection and needle tip load. From the two major force components of stiffness and inertia, the effective needle force L_n is given by $L_n = L_i - L_s$.

Therefore, for each soundbox, maximum values are -

$$\text{HMV 5a (M): } L_n = \frac{589Df^2}{129000} - 1272D$$

$$\text{HMV 5b: } L_n = \frac{546Df^2}{129000} - 766D$$

$$\text{Columbia no. 9: } L_n = \frac{443Df^2}{129000} - 1029D$$

If the upper limit of D be set at 0.1 mm., and of L_n at +100 gm. and -100 gm. (dependent on the direction of force), then the frequency compliance limits may be found. The frequency of natural resonance is also shown since this occurs when $L_n = 0$ and

the forces of stiffness and inertia are of equal and opposite values.

S'ndbox	Lower	Reson.	Upper	Span
5a (M)	244	528	705	461
5b	0	425	646	646
9	92	547	769	677

The span of the Columbia is not only the highest value, it also has the most usable range within the frequency spectrum. Interestingly, its diaphragm of 0.004 inch aluminium, and low stiffness is achieved by the use of deep contours and a single centre loading point. This soundbox is well made, appears to have no die-cast alloy components, and is easily taken apart.

At 92 Hz. the 5b has an L_n value of 27 gm. less than the Columbia no. 9, so it would be difficult to claim an advantage in terms of record wear. Although the spans are almost equal, the 5b has the disadvantage of a much lower starting point.

The span of the modified 5a shows, once again, the effect of increasing thickness by half a thousandth of an inch.

Frequency Responses

Tests were carried out on the five soundboxes so far mentioned, plus an HMV Exhibition. A near-mint popular music record was used and the output of the Model 163 was tape recorded using a commercial grade microphone. The same 25-second passage was used for each test and an electrical input was made to a computer equipped with a suitable acoustic analysis programme. Response curves were obtained with frequency displayed on both linear and logarithmic scales as well as printed values of maximum, minimum and average

RMS power in decibels.

The response curve for the 5b makes an interesting comparison with claims made for it in the 1930 HMV catalogue. The frequency range displayed in the catalogue has a maximum value of 5000 Hz., and its accompanying piano keyboard last note corresponds to 4184 Hz. In the final paragraph of catalogue p. 26, a full response range of 80 to 5000 Hz. is claimed, although our measured response falls off about 5 semitones below the top of the piano keyboard, i.e., at 3205 Hz.

The vertical axis of the HMV scale is displayed in descending order from 110 to 60

in units of "T.U. gain". The meaning of this is unclear, although it could be expected to take some logarithmic form.

The observed print-out values for the various soundboxes for minimum, maximum and average RMS power are set out in the table.

RMS Power

Soundbox	Minimum	Maximum	Average
HMV 4	-45.07	-3.72	-13.66
HMV 5	-41.37	-3.69	-12.64
HMV 5a (M)	-46.67	-5.31	-13.91
HMV 5b	-44.45	-2.28	-12.12
Columbia 9	-47.36	-2.81	-12.14
HMV Exhibition	-45.58	-3.01	-12.45

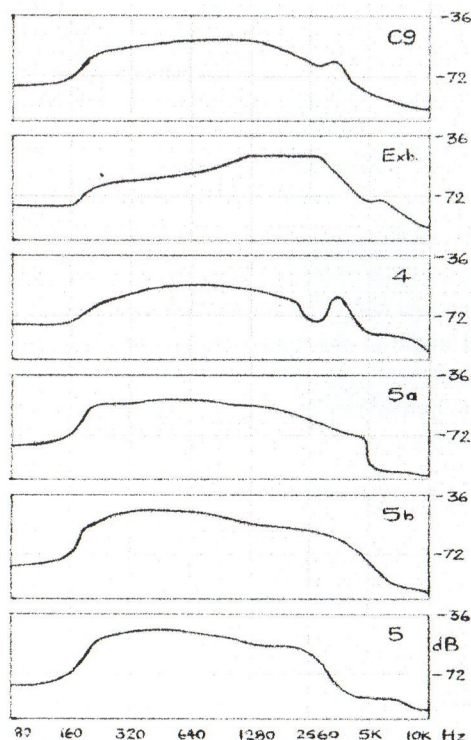


Figure 4. Frequency Responses

In terms of average power the difference between the 5b and the modified 5a is 1.79 dB, which is a linear increase of 51%. As a general guide, it is worth noting that one decibel is about the smallest change in level which the ear can detect: most listeners would believe the sound level had doubled in intensity when its actual increase was tenfold.

Sound Power Measurements

The record HMV B.10877 was again played on the Model 163 and a 102 portable, with the measurements being taken at the point of sound exit. The results are given below.

The energy range of the human ear is from one millionth of a microwatt per square metre at the threshold of audibility at 1000 Hz., to one watt per square metre at the

Machine	Needle	Min. dB	Max. dB	Soundbox
163	Loud	103	110	5b
163	Soft	93	103	5b
163	Loud	97	111	Columbia 9
102	Loud	107	118	5b
102	Soft	99	109	5b

threshold of feeling, giving an overall range of 120 dB. By way of illustration, 90 dB is equivalent to the sound of a pneumatic drill one metre away, while 110 dB registers as a thunderclap. An output of 0.027 watts is therefore not so small as first appearances might suggest.

Making a no. 5a Diaphragm

Great care is required in dismantling the soundbox since the diecast back plate is easily broken. Start by removing the front cover and then cut around the spider with a small scissors, making sure to preserve it safely.

With a second person to support the soundbox on the edge of a block of soft wood, lightly tap a broad-bladed screw-driver into the space occupied by the remains of the old diaphragm. Repeat as the box is rotated in stages and the two halves should slowly separate. Try to keep the halves parallel to each other during extraction to reduce the risk of breakage. In order to ensure easy re-assembly, it is advantageous to slightly reduce the diameter of the male shoulder in a lathe.

Cut a 57 mm. diameter disc from suitable foil and trap it in position between the two halves, using hand pressure only. Initial

forming is done with the tip of the free forefinger by following the circular ridges of the backplate. Using progressively smaller tools with rounded ends, work downwards from the ridges until the valley floors are reached, at which point the diaphragm can be removed.

If a stiffening ring is required, it should be formed using round-ended tools as before to produce a ring of circular dimples. An indexed circular jig is best suited to this purpose, and enables the diaphragm to be rotated in measured steps as each dimple is formed over a single indentation.

Carefully remove the spider and spread the feet, so that it sits evenly upon its support ridge, and then degrease it to remove the HMV sealing wax. Put a small deposit of epoxy resin adhesive on each foot. Place the spider into position, and bake in an oven at about 100 degrees Centigrade for an hour. The adhesive will initially flow with the heat and a neat and strong joint is produced.

Surround the joint with a strip of wet kitchen roll when the soldered connection is made at the spider centre, because the resin softens at about 150 degrees C., and molten solder is about 100 degrees hotter than this.

Concluding Remarks

This investigation began with a desire to authentically restore an acoustic soundbox, and if the results help other enthusiasts to achieve the same goal, then it has served its purpose.

The path has ended where it began in confirming that diaphragm stiffness is the main consideration, but the work has produced

one useful benefit - the removal of guesswork with regard to materials and dimensions.

Soundboxes are force-driven systems in that within practical upper limits of stiffness and inertia, the needle will follow the groove path and be subjected to the corresponding lateral forces. Only the record will suffer.

There can be little doubt that by the mid-1920s, the major manufacturers were well aware of the dual and related constraints

imposed by the large values of stiffness and inertia in acoustic systems. There was only one way forward, and it is of little surprise that when HMV and Columbia merged to form EMI, the first word of the company was "Electrical".

Acknowledgements

Throughout the course of this work, advice has been sought, and freely given, by a number of technically-minded friends. Thanks are due to them, and in particular to Mr. John Belfield for his close support and provision of computer services.

MARATHON

Instrument No. 12.



Pedestal Grand.

A SUPERB example of British cabinet work, most artistic in design, beautifully made in Solid Mahogany, with full piano finish. Powerful Double Spring Motor, with 12-inch turntable and speed indicator. "Marathon" new design Tone Arm (No. 5) with Universal Joints, enabling all types of Records to be played. "Marathon" New Sound Box. Equipped with solid mahogany "Music Master" horn, the finest wood horn made, giving a beautifully rich and mellow reproduction.

NO. 12.
Price £19 19s.

An Entirely New Type. *Eminently*
suitable for the Drawing-room.

This Supplement, with the full list dated September, 1913, forms a complete list of Marathon Records issued to date.

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONE CO. (1913), Ltd.,
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Smith's Printing Co., Ltd., London and St. Albans, Herts.

From the Rostrum

by Christopher Proudfoot

Report of the Sale at Christie's South Kensington, 28th July 1999

This sale followed a slightly unusual format, in that a large part consisted of a deceased collector's property, covering both musical boxes and talking machines, and this formed a complete section of the sale. There were thus two blocks of phonographs and gramophones in the catalogue.

Taking the collection first, this was an interesting reflection of changing collecting habits in the last two or three decades. While Gems, Standards and Homes have not increased significantly in value, they are more difficult to find outside specialist auctions and shops than they were, and this tends to concentrate collectors' minds more into searching for specific models to fill gaps, rather than taking on whatever comes to hand locally.

However many of the aforementioned Gems, Homes and Standards there are in a sale, they seem to hold their values well, and most on this occasion were in the £200-£300 range, with a Model A (New Style) Home achieving a hammer price of £320, matched by a Model C Gem with 4-minute attachment and octagonal horn. A red Gem did well to reach £450, considering it could boast only a modern alloy horn, and far outreaching them, as expected, was an Opera, repolished and with a shrinkage crack in the horn, at £3,500.

Gramophones in the collection were led by

a very clean Zonophone with oak horn, on target at £1100. A Mead conventional painted horn effort made £260, and the only other horn gramophone, a hideous concoction incorporating a transfer from a Cliftophone, was included with various bits and pieces and 200 10-inch records, to achieve £80.

A Klingsor with tinted glass in the doors hit £650, and £380 was paid for a William-and-Mary Deccalian, one of those handsome up-market, bijou cabinets based on the humble Decca portable.



Figure 1. The Deccalian Bijou cabinet gramophone, 1921, with 1950s soundbox. Copyright, Christie's.

Less attractive, but much rarer, was a black portable, un-named, but identified in a reprint of the 1913 Army & Navy Stores catalogue as a 'Picnic Compact'. 1913 is pretty early for a black portable (pre-Decca, after all), which accounts for its £140 hammer price. Included with it was a 1911 Zonophone Coronation puzzle record, which I mention as an introduction to the £240 achieved by a 1902 Berliner Coronation Plate, complete with its wood base but not its cardboard container, and with a disfiguring heat distortion to its centre portrait.

The second talking machine section, from general sources, included one or two interesting comparisons. For example, a Queen Mary's Dolls' House record, with its envelope, achieved a new high of £550. Less desirable, but much, much rarer, was a cardboard model of the Dolls' House Model 200 gramophone. Supplied on the HMV stand at Wembley as a flat sheet for cutting out and assembling, this ephemeral cabinet gramophone at £220 seems quite reasonable in view of its rarity, or quite absurd in view of its tatty fragility. It all depends how you look at it!



Figure 2. The very rare cardboard cut-out Dolls' House gramophone from the Wembley Exhibition, and the Dolls' House record. Copyright, Christie's.

A mate for the Deccalian was an Edison Bell Discaphone, of conventional specification but in a very pretty Chinese Chippendale style case with pierced legs, and a £260 price tag. Michael Ginn was represented by two interesting hybrids: an Expert Junior had acquired, early in its life, a Davey pick-up on an unusual small-bore tone arm, alongside the original acoustic arm. It was a Rathbone Place Expert, and one wonders what Ginn's reaction would have been, had he known of this rival attachment on his machine. It also had that rarely-surviving Expert feature, a round piece of oak to plug the hole where the horn fits, when it isn't fitted! The price was £1900, £400 more than the machine I would have preferred, an EMG Mark VIII de luxe, now equipped with a later EMG soundbox and a Mark Xa horn.

Top price in this section was £2400, for a coin-slot, travelling-arm Zonophone with a later soundbox; the oak case had been revarnished, though well done and with the transfers intact, and it was an impressive-looking dog-model derivative. Less impressive in appearance was a Lioret 'Le Merveilleux', in its typical cardboard case, and with a cylinder of a Frenchman singing 'God Save the Queen', indicating a date no later than 1901. This brought a winning bid of £1700, and anyone who thinks that there are no longer any bargains to be had should reflect on the fact that this had changed hands at Newark earlier in the year for £130.

To show that the steam had not gone out of the Edison market, a Spring Motor without a lid made £650, and a Home with an R reproducer, 19-inch octagonal horn and blue lining on the bedplate (making it a very late

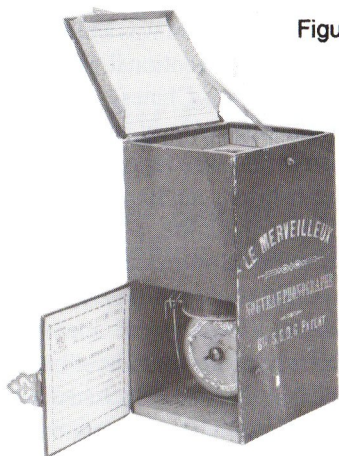


Figure 3. The Lioret 'Le Merveilleux'. Copyright, Christie's.

Model B) achieved £420. Two table Amberolas, a VI and a 50, each made £300, but Diamond Disc models are out of fashion, with three different ones each managing only £140.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate some of the more unusual items included in the sale.

(All prices quoted above are 'Hammer' Prices - the purchaser pays an additional 15% Premium plus VAT.)

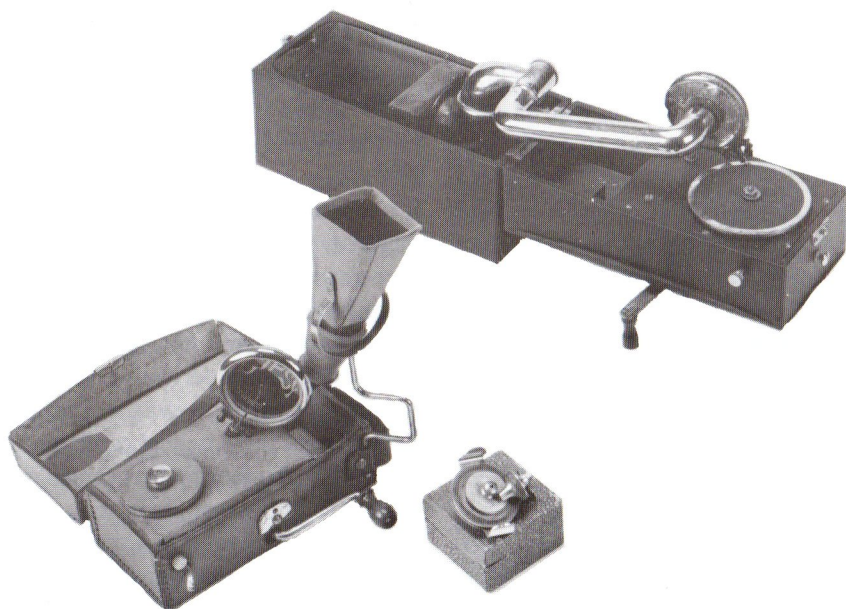


Figure 4. At top: Metaxylon box-camera gramophone, wound from below (£310).

Below: Phonos 'Gipsy' portable in leather case, with a Faytone (home recorder) needle sharpener (£260).

Copyright, Christie's.



Figure 5. German pedestal gramophone, with vertical horn and reflector-top, 57 inches high (£1300).
Copyright, Christie's.

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1. Urchfont Manor College, near Devizes:
October 22-24: phone 01380-840495
2. Higham Hall College, Bassenthwaite Lake,
Cockermouth: February 25-27, 2000: phone
017687-76276.

PROGRAMME INFORMATION

London Meeting, 16th. November 1999:

Will Members please note, that as previously advised, this meeting will comprise the following programme -

Ewan Langford presents "Revelations";
and
Geoff Edwards presents "A Continental Tour".

Midlands Group Meeting, Birmingham, November meeting:

This meeting will take place on 27th November, in the temporary venue of the Salvation Army Building, Little Shadwell Street.

THE GOOD COMPANIONS

The 101 and Other Compact HMV Portables - part 2

by Dave Cooper

Addendum to part 1. Since publication of part 1, I have managed to see a third version of the brown crocodile 101! The first version appears to be the one I described as a chestnut colour with brown turntable felt; the second one a dark brown crocodile finish (similar to the later leatherette version); thirdly, the crocodile version of the lighter chestnut covering already mentioned. Both the latter versions have the beige turntable felt.

In researching the 101, I tried to identify what the letters given after the model number were for and whether these letters would be a guide to the date of manufacture. This task was made all the more difficult by the fact that early machines did not even have an identifying plate showing the model number. The first machines to do so carried the number '101E'. Only letters G, H, J, and L followed.

I thought it was worth continuing on this theme, attempting to give a profile for all the 101s using letters upto and including the letter M (excluding the letter I, for obvious reasons). The machines that have no identifying letter include the letters A to D, F, K, and M.

Of course, the letter - when used - could refer to batches of machines. It would make more sense, as the identifying plates remind the owner of the machine to quote

the model number for spare parts. I believe that this is the most likely reason for the letters used, although it is possible that they have no useful meaning at all on 101s.

In later years and models, a letter *would* refer to a slight change to the design. It could be as simple a change as the introduction of metal corners, an innovation which would help ease the job of the assembler in the factory to hide awkward joins in the leathercloth on the outer casing.

There were two versions of the identification plate when it changed from ivory to metal. On one, the printing was in English, French and German, suggesting that HMV were exporting 101s by that time. The HMV trade mark in Germany after the Great War belonged to the newly independent Deutsche Grammophon company. So, British HMV's brand name was 'Electrola' and 101s were available under that name and transfer. Even the soundbox was marked 'Electrola no. 4'. I have seen a black example of one as described, complete with a German dealer's trade plate.

As the Gramophone Company did not always use the most straightforward numbering systems, it is unwise to assume that the first 101 was considered the 101A by

HMV! Nevertheless, I decided to try and identify the machines in alphabet order from A-M. If we accepted the first incarnation of the 101 as model 101A, the 'version' might read thus -

Version	HM V 101A
Date of Production	From Autumn 1925
Colours Available	Black (or Teak, in India)
Motor	Type 400
Escutcheon	Style 1
Catch or Lock	Style 1
Fittings	Bright Nickel Plate
Identifying Plate	None
Winding Handle	Style 1
Carrying Handle	Style 1

Other Comments

Note that the 101A had the same self-closing needle containers as the 100 but in the left-hand corner of the lid.

There were no rubber feet fitted to the bottom case corners.

There was no provision for Tungstyle needle tins.

The inside of the record compartment in

the lid of the case was often not covered in leathercloth on the inside.

The machine had the thick-frame Trade Mark transfer.

All the above information was based on examination of the first 101s and should be acceptable to most collectors as being reasonably accurate.

I expect that there are machines with a mixture of fittings where old parts were used up in the factory. Dealers or restorers may have changed a part in poor condition with one from a broken machine. Incidentally, the 1930 HMV instrument catalogue clearly showed an earlier 101 than that actually on sale at the time. (The same picture appears on some HMV record sleeves.)

It is worth noting that the Gramophone Company made most of the parts for their machines from the cases to the motors. This was quite an achievement. Only cabinet fittings such as locks, catches, and carrying handles were bought in.

What follows is a summary of my original thoughts about versions of the 101. I was able by examining many 101s and by cross-referencing with those in my own collection, to work out the order of appearance and disappearance of the various locks and other parts used on the 101s.

The Model 101 Quick Identification Table

Version	Available Colours	Motor No.	Escutcheon	Catch/- Lock Style	Carrying Handle	ID. Plate	Trade Mark
A*	C	400	1	1	1	None	Old
B*	C	400	2	1	1	None	Old
C*	C, LB, B, G, RL (1)	410	3	1	1	None	Old
D*	Ditto (1)	59	4	1	2	None	Old
E	Ditto (1)	59	4	3	2	1	New
F*	Ditto Plus R	59	4	2	2	1	New
G (early)	Ditto plus V	59	4 (plus 5 back-plate)	3	2	2 (only) or 2 + Metal 2 + Metal	New
G (later)	Ditto	59	5	4	2	or Metal (only)	New
H	Ditto	59	5	4/5	2	Metal	New
J	Ditto	59	5	5	2	Metal	New
K*	Ditto	59	5	5	2	3	New
L	Ditto	59	5	5	2	3	New
M*	Ditto	270	6	6	2	3	Small

* These letters are postulated, and await confirmation from documentary sources.

B Brown

C Black

G Grey

LB Blue

R Red

RL Red Leather

V Green

(1) Crocodile finish on all except Black and Red Leather.

Order of Changes to the 101

1. Using the information shown in the 101A chart, the first changes to the 101 appeared around the autumn of 1926. The escutcheon and winding handle changed to Style 2 [for winding handle types, see *Figure 4, p.316 of Issue 226, Summer 1999 - Ed.*]. (The crank of the Style 1 winding handle had a deeper throw and the machine had to be on a raised level for winding. The Style 2 handle was not much

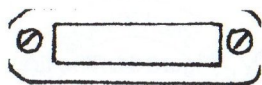


Figure 1. The Tungstyle Needle Tin Clip, Style 1.

better.) A Tungstyle needle clip (Style 1) was introduced. A new right-hand corner needle drawer replaced the two needle bins. The carrying handle claws required screws of different lengths due to the position of the new needle drawer.

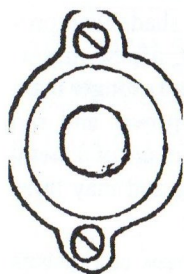


Figure 2. The Style 2 Escutcheon.

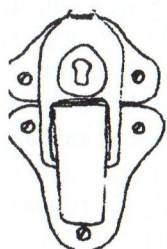


Figure 3. Lock/Catch Style 1.

Under the motor board of some of the 'new' 101s were signs of the forthcoming side-wind escutcheon shown as cutaways in the supporting battens. Rubber feet were incorporated into the corners on the bottom of the case.

2. Coloured machines possibly arrived early in 1927. The colours on offer were Black Leathercloth, Brown, Blue or Grey Crocodile-Effect Leathercloth and Red Leather. The brown crocodile was a beautiful chestnut colour with a lighter brown

turntable felt than that on the black machine's turntable. The Red Leather version had gilt fittings inside and out.

3. The escutcheon changed to Style 3. There was a plate attached to the top lid which covered the winding hole when the case was closed. The inside fittings were finished in nickel; outside fittings were nickel on coloured machines, blackened nickel on black machines.



Figure 4. The Style 3 Escutcheon.

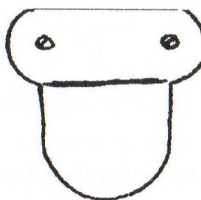


Figure 5. Cover plate for the Style 3 Escutcheon.

Red leather machines continued to have gilt fittings inside and out. The winding handle changed to Style 3, and this was the first side-winding machine with the winding handle at an angle, which meant that the machine could be wound on a flat surface. The Style 2 Tungstyle needle tin clip was also introduced at this time.

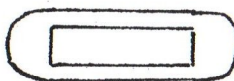


Figure 6. The Tungstyle Needle Tin Clip, Style 2.

4. Next, the escutcheon developed into Style 4, and a new, spring-loaded carrying handle (Style 2) was introduced, named the 'Pakawa'. This was a much more comfortable handle to use and lasted, after the demise of the 101, on the models 102 and 99.

These were probably the first 'bought-in' carrying handles. I have no information about their supplier.

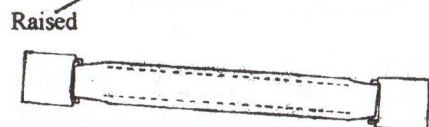
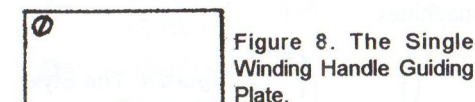
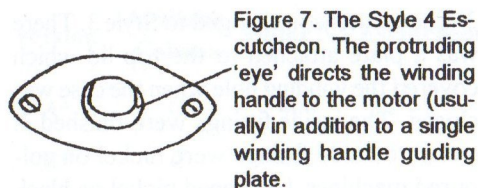


Figure 9. The 'Pakawa' Sprung Carrying Handle.

5. A new brown crocodile leathercloth (in a much paler colour than previously - again, very attractive with a light beige/brown turntable) was introduced. The escutcheon cover plate (Figure 5) was discontinued.

6. The lock changed from Style 1 to Style 2. The first Identifying Plate appeared and the new Trade Mark with 'His Master's Voice' above it replaced the 'patent pending', large framed transfer.

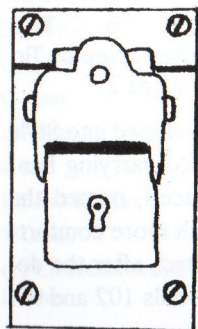


Figure 10. Catch/Lock Style 2.



Figure 11. The first 'ivoryine' identifying plate.

7. By late 1928, the crocodile-effect leathercloth was replaced by Morocco grain leathercloth. A new colour (red leathercloth) appeared. The brown cloth changed to a much darker shade than previously. More importantly, a new motor, the no. 59 was used. This had a longer main spring which gave more power and ran longer. It also had the advantage of a metal cover which kept out dust and may have reduced some motor noise.

8. By early 1929, another new colour was introduced - green leathercloth. The escutcheons used were either Style 4 with a Style 5 backplate, or a Style 5 front *and* back plate. Old Style 1 identifying plates were used up to be superseded by the Style 2 plate. Some machines of this period had both a Style 2 and a metal plate - others carried the metal plate only. The locks changed first to Style 3, then to Style 4. There were two versions of the metal plate used to identify the version of the machine.



Figure 12. The Style 5 Escutcheon.

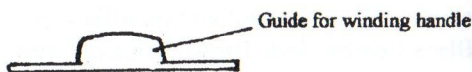


Figure 13. The Style 5 Backplate.

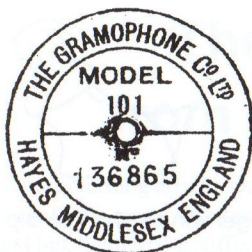


Figure 14. The second style of 'ivorine' identifying plate.

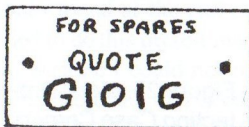


Figure 15. The first style of metal identifying plate.

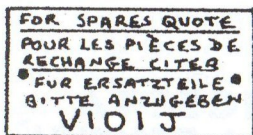


Figure 16. The second style of metal identifying plate.

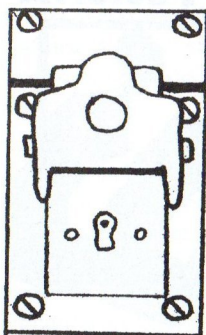


Figure 17. Catch/lock Style 3.

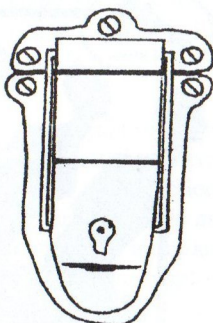


Figure 18. Catch/lock Style 4.

9. Eventually, the Style 5 escutcheon took over, and only the metal identifying plate was used. The Style 4 lock eventually gave way to the Style 5 version.

10. The 'three-language' version of the metal plate became the most commonly used identification plate, and the Tungstyle needle tin clip, Style 3 was also introduced.



Figure 19. The Tungstyle Needle Tin Clip, Style 3.

11. The auto brake arrived, and new, stronger winding handle clips were put into the inside of the lid. (There was no room on the motor board.) The manual brake was made redundant and was no longer found. Telltale pinpricks, where an assembler would screw the part onto the motor board, may be seen. The second type of metal identifying plate began to disappear, and was replaced by a third 'ivorine' plate.

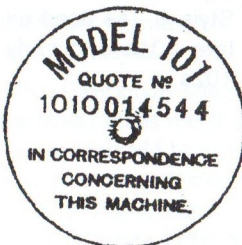


Figure 20. The third style of 'ivorine' identifying plate.

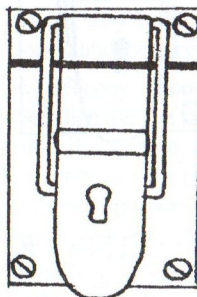


Figure 21. Catch/lock Style 5.

12. Finally, the no. 59 motor was replaced by an unnumbered motor (actually no. 270) also found on 102s. The fittings changed from nickel plate to chrome plate. The Trade Mark and HMV wording reduced in size to that seen on later HMV portables such as the 102 and 99. The turntable felts on these later machines varied slightly in tone from the ones used on most 101s, and these shades continued with the new portable models. Another escutcheon was used on these late 101s - Style 6. The catch/lock moved to Style 6, the style which was also used on the first 102s. Also, the motor-board on black models was now of a clamped, rather than laminated, construction. Various combinations of 59/270 motor with nickel or chrome fittings have been observed.

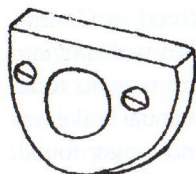


Figure 22. The Style 6 Escutcheon - doubled and folded over the edge of the case.

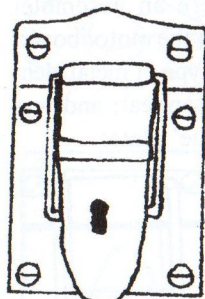


Figure 23. Catch/lock Style 6 - as used on late 101s and early 102s.

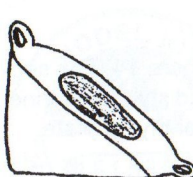


Figure 24. New stronger winding handle clip and socket.

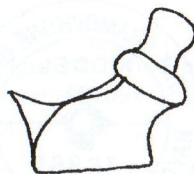
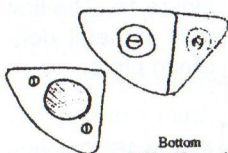


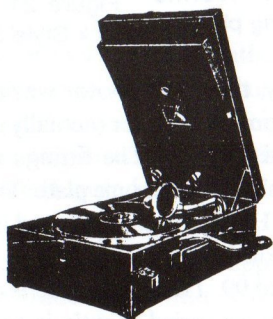
Figure 25. Metal Protecting Case Corners



Bottom
(With rubber stud.)

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"La Voce del Padrone"

To be continued ...

The 101s - a Postscript

from Christopher Proudfoot

In the preceding article, Dave Cooper sets out to classify the many different versions of the 101 and link them to the suffix letters that are sometimes found at the end of the model number. I tried to do this myself many years ago, and gave up because I could not make the known variations preceding 101G correspond with six letters of the alphabet (I had not, and still have not myself seen a 101E). We cannot tell whether 101A was the first version, or the second (i.e., the first variation from the original), and although J and L are identified, K is not. Quite possibly, 101K (and some of the other unidentified letters) was an export model; certainly, some Ls were modified Js, which suggests that K either had a very short run, or was never intended for the home market.

Puzzled by the anomalies which seem to exist in the alphabetical sequence, I suggested to Dave that the suffix letters might refer to production batches rather than to specification details as such, which would explain why there is sometimes no obvious difference between examples with different letters. I do not feel entirely convinced by this, however, and discovery of a piece of wrong information I gave him suggests another explanation. The Model 100 and early 101 has an all-steel, circular pillar-and-plate frame motor which in the later 101s is called 410 (with an angled winder shaft).

I have seen examples of the earlier, horizontally-wound motor stamped 425, and assumed this to be the number of that motor, but a chance recently to glance briefly at a parts list showed that it was not so called by the factory, and the 425 number appears to refer to the bottom plate of one of the several slightly different versions of this motor. From a later (probably 1950s) list of spring sizes, it appears that this is motor no. 400, which in any case is a more appropriate generic

name for it. So what? you may say. Well, the main purpose of the suffix letters was probably to help in the accurate ordering of spare parts, and any variation in motor parts (bigger pivots, slightly different gear ratios, for example) would call for a different letter. The answer to some of the letters' significance, therefore, may lie in a detailed study of motors. Anyone game for a try?

When Dave kindly sent me his draft copy, among my observations was that 101L, then the last on his chart, should be at least one, if not three or four, from the end, and there must be at least be a 101M. Only recently, I came across a parts list, dated February 1931, for 101N. This had the 170 motor and chromium fittings, as listed in the May 1931 HMV Instruments catalogue.

What then, is 101M? Well, I have seen a 101 in chrome with a 59 motor, and a 101 in nickel with the 270 motor. The choice is yours, until more evidence turns up, but my bet would be on the 270 motor-with-nickel option, since the motor would affect spares ordering more than the finish.

The spring-list referred to above, incidentally, also implies that the 400/410 motor was replaced by the 59 with the advent of 101D (the springs are of very different sizes - 9 ft. 6 ins. for the 400 series, and 13 ft. 6 ins., 14 ft., or 14 ft. 6 ins. for the 59 and 270, depending on which list you believe!)

I hope that publication of Dave Cooper's series will elicit more information from collectors. I appeal to all 101 owners to check their machines against Dave's chart, and write in with any information, especially if you can answer the question as to whether a 101F or 101K has been seen, and its features confirmed; or whether any of the inferred models on the chart can be verified from documentary sources, such as parts lists, etc.

The Missing Link

by George Taylor

It is well known that in 1925, the major recording companies - Victor, HMV and Columbia - obtained licences from Western Electric for making electrical recordings. At a stroke, these companies made obsolete their vast repertoire of acoustic records and ventured into a new and untried field of technology. How did Western Electric achieve this breakthrough?

In 1919, a research group under J. P. Maxfield was set up by Western Electric Engineering (later Bell Telephone Laboratories), the research wing of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company - AT & T - to develop processes for recording electrically. By the early 1920s, progress was such that experiments were being made to record real performances. To this end, a telephone line was laid between the stage of the Capitol Theater in New York and the Western Electric recording facility, and trial recordings of a range of small-scale acts of the music hall type could be made.

At this time, radio broadcasting was spreading in America: in New York, station WEAf was controlled by AT & T. Here then, was another source of material for Western Electric to record.

If the new developments in electrical recording were to be of interest to major record producers such as Victor, successful recordings of classical music, including large-scale orchestral works would have to be demonstrated. Even Western Electric did not have a symphony orchestra readily to

hand; so how did they overcome this problem - the 'missing link'?

An answer to this puzzle started to emerge when I received a sampler disc promoting a set of CDs of 'Historic Broadcasts by the New York Philharmonic, 1923 to 1987'. One of the tracks contained a fragment of Strauss's 'Tod und Verklarung', recorded on 2 April 1924. Was this one of Western Electric's experimental symphonic recordings? It was indeed. The archivist of the New York Phil. kindly gave me more information on this and other early electrical recordings of broadcasts by the orchestra. AT & T's WEAf (originally WBAY, but quickly changed to WEAf) went on air on 25th July 1922. There were ten Philharmonic broadcasts during the 1923-1924 season. There survive experimental recordings from at least four of these broadcasts - December 3rd and 17th, 1923, 21st January and 2nd April, 1924. The Strauss fragment on the sampler CD was from the April 1924 broadcast, conducted by Willem Mengelberg. In the other three recordings, the conductor was Willem van Hoogstraten, and the 17th December Hoogstraten fragment is also reproduced in the CD set.

According to the notes sent me by the archivist, the 'test pressings [were] many of them oversize, the date scratched in the area between the groove and label, but otherwise unidentified'. They were identified for what they were by comparing the music with radio programmes surviving from the period and known to be broadcast by the

New York Philharmonic.

I can comment on the Mengelberg recording. I assume that the acoustic of the original test pressing has been reproduced reasonably faithfully on the CD. The recording, which runs for about six minutes, has some faint 78 rpm (or thereabouts) swish, and is obviously electrical, with a wide frequency range and a rather strident tone and boxy acoustic - features of many of the early published electrical orchestral records. The dynamic range is very wide, indeed unrealistically so; whether this was deliberate or a limitation of the recording equipment I can't say. The clarity of sound is remarkably good. The sound breaks up a little near the end of the fragment, and I should imagine that this is a feature of the original recording (or its processing) rather than subsequent deterioration of the shellac disc.

If this recording is typical of what could be achieved by early 1924, it is not surprising

that Western Electric were confident of commercial success when they approached Victor later in the year.

Notes.

1. Western Electric's development of electrical recording is summarised in Read and Welch's 'From Tinfoil to Stereo', 2nd ed. 1976, p.255 *et seq.*, and in F. H. Lovette and S. Watkins, 'Twenty Years of "Talking Movies": an Anniversary', Bell Telephone Magazine, summer 1946, pp. 82-100.
2. The orchestral CD set is 'New York Philharmonic: The Historic Broadcasts 1923 to 1987', ten CDs issued 1997, available from NYP Historic Broadcast Set, PO Box 3836, Milford, CT-06460; USA. \$185, plus \$15 shipping to Europe.

Acknowledgements.

I thank Barbara Haws, archivist of the New York Philharmonic, for some of the historical information, and Paul Cleary for photocopies of certain reference articles.

The 1999 Northampton Phonofair

Interesting displays, interesting conversation ...



A Case of Cylinders, no.3

by Michael Hegarty

Let us play another early 2-minute cylinder, another Edison, too! No. 1570 "Sweet Inniscarra" - an Irish song composed by Chauncey Ollcott, who composed so many similar songs, including 'Mother Machree' and 'When Irish eyes are Smiling'. Ollcott recorded several of his compositions for the Columbia company. I've often wondered how he selected Inniscarra as a subject for a song - it's a tiny village situated a few miles outside Cork City. Many years ago, when I was a racing cyclist, I passed through it!

However, Ollcott was not born in Ireland, but the singer on this cylinder was. Announcing himself, Mr. George J. Gaskin was born in Belfast in 1863, and by the 1890s he was well-known on the New York stage. I'm sure he must have been the first Irishman to record commercially because he was

making tenor solos in the early 1890s. Working for almost all the companies, his songs included comic, sacred, patriotic and more. His was a loud tenor voice which suited primitive recording equipment, but by about 1903, his popularity as a recording artist had declined. Reading from the catalogue of The National Gramophone Co. for 1898, it states "Mr. George J. Gaskin is especially well-known as a record maker with a clear and powerful tenor voice, he enunciates each word with great distinctness. The Gaskin records are among the most popular in our catalogue". Gaskin tried a recording comeback with Pathe when, in 1916, they issued a 12-inch, vertical-cut disc, no. 29115 'Killarney' and 'Come back to Erin'. He made no others. Gaskin himself did not come back to Erin as he died in New York in 1920.



George J. Gaskin

Book Review

The Decca Record Company Limited Decca 78 rpm Records - 1929-1954 12-inch Diameter Discs - "K", "T", "X", "S" 10-inch Diameter Discs - "M", "A", "Z"

A DISCOGRAPHY COMPILED BY MICHAEL SMITH

Michael Smith, the Society's new Treasurer, is well-known in the discography world. Many years ago, he was involved in some of the pioneering volumes called 'Voices of the Past', published by Oakwood Press. More recently, he compiled 'Columbia Graphophone Company Limited - Columbia DX and YBX Series of 78 rpm discs, 1930-1959' along with Frank Andrews, Ernest Bayly and Ernie Bayly.

With this book, Michael has plugged a long-standing gap in the chronicling of Decca recordings. Michael goes right back to the start of the Decca Record Co. Ltd. in 1929. Michael Walker gives a brief outline of the history of the company in the introduction, then Michael Smith describes the various recording venues Decca used. A list of the different catalogue numbers used in various countries follows. A brief list of contents comes next with various acknowledgements to those who helped Michael in this enterprise.

On page 7, Michael gets right into the 'nitty gritty' of the book, starting with the listing of the 12-inch 'K' series. Most collectors are familiar with this series, being the series with which Decca built up their

own classical recordings. Initially, popular recordings were included, but by the time the second World War started, the 'K' was almost exclusively a classical label. The records are listed in catalogue number in ascending order, with the date of issue given, where known. The second column gives the matrix numbers, the third, the recording date, where known. Column four lists the artists, and the works, followed by the composer.

After the 'K' series, Michael lists the 'X' series, another 12-inch label. The series started in 1935 and continued until 1954, but was a relatively small series consisting of 574 records. There are some records in the 'X' series that are pretty scarce today, like the Russian recordings of excerpts from Borodin's 'Prince Igor' with the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra conducted by A. Melik-Pasheev and Tchaikovsky's 'Rococo Variations' with Daniel Shafran (cello) and the Leningrad State Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk. These two and a few other Russian recordings were issued by Decca in 1943 but did not stay in the catalogue for any length of time. Another odd feature of the 'X' series was the inclusion of Polydor

recordings. Decca had a 12-inch Decca-Polydor series with the prefixes 'CA' and 'LY', so I'm not clear as to why some recordings were issued in the Decca 'X' series. Michael Smith includes all these in his listing, and by looking at the matrix numbers and the artists it is easy to distinguish between these and genuine Decca recordings.

There is one page devoted to Decca's first records on the 10-inch 'A' series and the 12-inch 'S' series. There are only two 'A' series records and four 'S' series records. All of these are virtually impossible to come across today. Probably the most interesting of these is Roy Henderson's performance of Delius' 'Sea Drift' on S 10010-10012, which was the first recording of the work to be issued. This page is completed by listing the 10-inch 'Z' series, which consisted of 6 records, Z1-Z6 (all of the same work, Prokofiev's 'Romeo and Juliet Suite no. 2'. Z2 was never issued - Michael states this was probably due to the stampers being damaged in wartime transit from Russia. This seems a very logical explanation to me.

The next pages in the book are devoted to listing the 10-inch 'M' series. The earlier records were issued on magenta-coloured labels and are very rare today. The content ranges from Classical to Popular. Amongst the rarest of the popular items are the recordings by Ambrose and his Orchestra, and many now scarce recordings by Roy Henderson, Dale Smith and Sir Stuart Wilson are to be found in this section. The 'M' magenta series consisted of catalogue nos. M1-M164. In 1932, Decca relaunched the series with a red la-

bel starting at M400. The new series also mixed classical material with popular. The red 'M's continued until January 1954, ending then with catalogue no. M682.

Throughout the book, Michael gives full details of any records that were re-issued in another series, so it is easy to keep track of the recordings.

Michael ends the book with a most interesting section in which he details many recordings that Decca made, but never issued. These include recordings by such artists as Clifford Curzon, The Grinke Trio, Frederic Lamond, Noel Newton-Wood, Peter Pears, and Oda Slobodskaya. There are many other artists too numerous to list here. One can only speculate on how much richer the Decca catalogue would have been if these recordings had been issued.

For the first time, I've been able to date all my classical Decca recordings. Up until now I've only been able to guess at the recording dates. Any time I tried to find out the information from Decca I was informed the information was lost and no longer available. Collectors like myself will forever be indebted to Michael Smith for putting this information in the public domain.

All in all this is an excellent book and is a must for any serious record collector. I can thoroughly recommend it and advise those interested to purchase before it goes out of print. This soft-covered book contains 224 A4 pages and is available from Michael Smith at [REDACTED] GILLINGHAM, Kent; ME8 0HG, at **£25 plus postage and packing.**

Chris Hamilton

Obituaries

Bert Firman

The Daily Telegraph of 28th May 1999 reported the death at the age of 96 of Bert Firman, one of the legendary names of the British Dance Band era. His bands set high standards for jazz-oriented dance music at the time when the Charleston and Black Bottom dance crazes were current.

Bert Firman was born Herbert Feuermann in London on 3rd February 1903, one of four brothers, all of whom were destined for the music business. Bert became a violinist, but at the age of 19, joining the Midnight Follies Orchestra as a musician, he soon became its leader. From 1924 to 1928, during which time he was resident band leader at the Carlton Hotel and Musical Director for Zonophone, his bands made hundreds of records for the Zonophone

and Homochord labels. Bert Firman's bands' records were sold under about fourteen different names, including the 'Midnight Follies', the Arcadians Dance Orchestra, the orchestras of Eugene Brockman and Eddie Norman, the Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band, and the Rhythmic Eight. From 1929 until the war, he led a succession of bands at hotels and clubs in London, Paris, Monte Carlo and elsewhere, as well working in Hollywood and New York.

Joining the army in 1940, he led the forces' show 'Stars in Battledress'. After the war, he led his band at Paris' Bagatelle club for a few years, before leaving Paris and music, to pursue a new career in London's finance industry, retiring in 1976.

Editor

Patrick Saul

We are sorry to hear of the death in July of Patrick Saul, founder of the British Institute of Recorded Sound, later the National Sound Archive. He was 85.

In his younger days in the 1930s, and concerned that performances by famous musicians were being lost to the general public in the record companies' annual deletions, Saul approached the British Museum for funds and storage, and received a sympathetic reception but very little money, and was advised to come back when he was older. After support from several philanthropists in the musical world, a building became available to the British Institute of Recorded Sound at 38 Russell Square, but was limited by the weight of shellac records it could carry on the upper floors.

In 1968, the Institute moved to a striking red-

brick building at 29 Exhibition Road, but faced further repair costs of £75,000, then a much more significant sum than it is today. The records were stored in the basement, with administration and programme monitoring taking place in the upper rooms.

The Institute and its collection was integrated with the British Library in 1983 and became the National Sound Archive, but never seemed to settle comfortably. However, in 1997, it moved to the new British Library buildings at St. Pancras, where it can compete with sound and television archives that are now well-established in some European countries.

Patrick Saul received the OBE in 1971 and retired in 1978, the year of his marriage to Diana Hull who survives him.

George Frow

Report of the 80th Anniversary Meeting

CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY 1919-1999 80th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Treue Freunde Marsch (Holzman) | Johann Strauss Orchestra
26047 1913 (15082 1912) |
| 2. Mira di Acerbe Lagrime "Il Trovatore" (Verdi) | Marie Rappold, Taurino Parvis
29015 1919 (82573 1921?) |
| 3. I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen (after Westendorf) | Venetian Instrumental 4tet
3448 1918 (80391 1917) |
| 4. Your Dear Brown Eyes (Adams & Weatherly) | Hughes Macklin
23391 1915 |
| 5. Toreador Song "Carmen" (Bizet) | Peter Dawson
23065 1913 (12388 1911) |
| 6. She's My Daisy (Lauder) | Harry Lauder
1817 1913 (12065 1909) |
| 7. Aloha Oe (Queen Liliuokalani) | Frieda Hempel & the Criterion Quartet
29007 1918 (82551 1918) |
| 8. Gems of Wales (arr. G.W. Byng) | National Military Band
23344 1914 (12268 1911) |
| 9. Ballet Egyptien no. 1 (Luigini) | National Military Band
23237 1914 |
| 10. Springtime (Troostwyk) Violin | Hendrika Troostwyk
2363 1914 |
| 11. Marche aux Flambeaux (Meyerbeer) | Garde Republicaine
27056 1913 (17069 1911) |
| 12. Flying Squadron (Seymour) | National Military Band
23345 1915 (12064 1909) |
| 13. "Coppelia" Entr'acte & Waltz (Delibes) | Armand Vecsey and Hungarian Orch
28181 1914 (28015 1912) |
| 14. God Save the King | Peter Dawson and the National Military Band
23318 1914 (12340 1911) |

This programme of records is the exact same as that of our society's first meeting on Wednesday the 28th of May 1919, held at "The Clachan", Mitre Court, Fleet Street. A "Fireside" phonograph with oak Music Master cygnet horn was used on that occasion. We have the same outfit today except for a top cover for the phonograph.

The numbers following the title and artistes of the records are : In bold type, the record number followed by the year of issue in fine type. In brackets are the record number and issue year of the record from which the Blue Amberol derives, if this is relevant. ie Some Blue Amberols were originally Wax Amberols, others are dubbed from Diamond Discs



Figure 1. Members present at the 80th Anniversary Meeting.

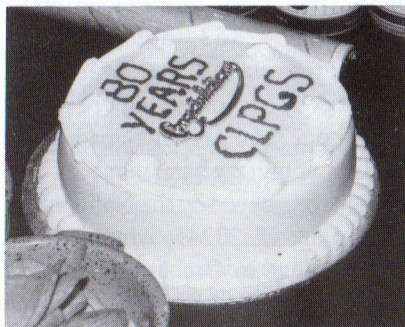


Figure 2. The CLPGS' 80th Birthday cake.

On Wednesday, 28th May 1919, at 'The Clachan' public house in Mitre Court, Fleet Street, the Society held its first meeting. To celebrate the 80th Anniversary of this event, the CLPGS recreated that original programme on 18th May 1999, at the Swedenborg Centre in Bloomsbury, not far from Mitre Court. The programme was a re-creation of that first meeting, even down to the equipment used, a Fireside 'B' phonograph with an oak Music Master Cygnet horn, although the original phonograph had been fitted with a home-made wooden sound baffle covering the reproducer.

The meeting was opened by a short address from the CLPGS Chairman, Howard Hope, and success toasted to the next 80 years, before handing over to Dominic Combe, the evening's presenter.

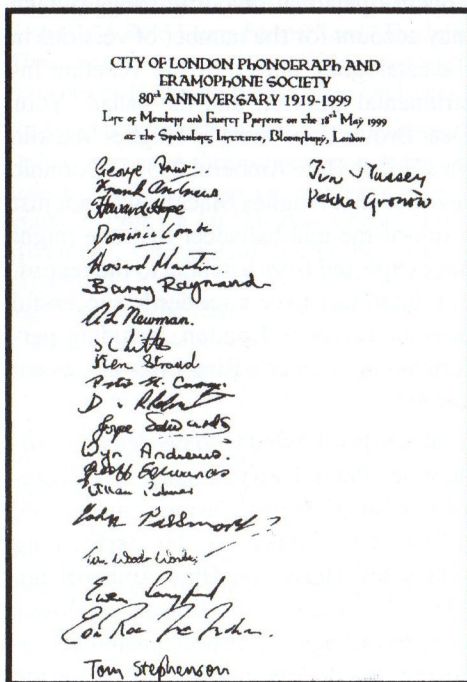


Figure 3. The Attendance Sheet for the Meeting.

Dominic presented the programme with great aplomb, revealing a considerable depth of knowledge into both the music played and the artists recorded. The evening opened in rousing style with a march by Holzman, 'Treue Freude', played by the Johann Strauss Orchestra on German Blue Amberol 26047, followed by a superb dubbed Purple Amberol 29015

'Mira di Acerbe Lagrime' from 'Il Trovatore', sung by Marie Rappold and Taurin Parvis - Dominic delighting in explaining the convoluted and highly improbable story of the opera. A few items of more humble fare followed, 'I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen' (3448), reputedly one of Edison's personal favourite songs (which may account for the number of versions in the catalogue), played by the Venetian Instrumental Quartet, and the ballad 'Your Dear Brown Eyes' sung by Hughes Macklin on a British Blue Amberol 23391. Dominic revealed that Hughes Macklin was not just a run-of-the-mill balladeer that one might have expected from listening to the record, but did in fact have a modestly successful operatic career in London, including performing in Wagner's Ring cycle at Covent Garden.

Two artists followed who needed no introduction: Peter Dawson sang 'The Toreador's Song' from 'Carmen' on 23065, followed by Harry Lauder performing 'She's My Daisy' on Blue Amberol no. 1817. Throughout the Edison catalogue were recordings of artists in unfamiliar repertoire: Frieda Hempel with the Criterion Quartet singing 'Aloha Oe' on Royal Purple 29007 is a prime example of this. Frieda Hempel was a great operatic soprano who was chosen by Richard Strauss to star in the Berlin and American premieres of *Der Rosenkavalier*. But she still performed Queen Liliuokalani's homage to Hawaii with a certain amount of enthusiasm and charm.

'Gems of Wales' on 23344 provided a standard selection of Welsh fare, and the first part of 'Ballad Egyptien' on 23237,

both by the National Military Band gave a military turn to the programme. 'Ballad Egyptien' was a very popular piece at the turn of the century. Excerpts from the ballet are still in the record catalogues today, and Edison had no fewer than three different versions of Parts 1, 2 & 3 on cylinder alone.

Hendrika Troostwyk played her own composition 'Springtime', on the violin, on Blue Amberol no. 2363, and the Garde Republicaine played the 'Marche aux Flambeaux' by Meyerbeer on French Blue Amberol no. 27056. 'Flying Squadron' was a selection of military band numbers with a martial theme, played by the National Military Band on no. 23345. Armand Vecsey and his Hungarian Orchestra played two selections from Delibes' ballet 'Coppelia' on a concert Blue Amberol no. 28181. The original programme in 1919 closed with Peter Dawson singing 'God Save the King' on no. 23318, which included the now rarely sung third verse.

After the close of the 'official' programme, Dominic very kindly played a few encores on his 'Opera' phonograph, amongst which were 'My Sin' performed by the Golden Gate Orchestra on no. 5713, one of the very last Blue Amberols to be issued, and electrically recorded although dubbed. This was followed by a jazz number, 'Footwarmer' played by the Louisiana Five on no. 3843. Many thanks indeed are due to Dominic for his programme, and also to Howard Hope for opening address, and for the refreshments served throughout the programme. This was certainly an evening to savour and remember for a long time.

Tim Wood-Woolley

Other Reports

London, 15th June 1999

A double bill was presented to the London Members on this evening at the Swedenborg Centre, Bloomsbury.

First to take the floor was Colin Armfield, who presented a most unusual and entertaining programme of "Non-Shellac Ramblings and Warblings", being a selection of amateur recordings and non-commercial pressings.

The discs which Colin played varied from two workers from Harrod's making a recording in their tea break with a potted history of Harrod's on the reverse side, to BBC recordings made for the American audience during the Second World War. In between, Colin thoroughly entertained us in his inimitable style with a series of 'Record Your Voice' type of discs from 'Voice-O-Graph', being an aural postcard, a 'Calibre' recording playing at 45 rpm, and examples from 'Warners Automatic', 'Levi's Sound Studios', 'Silvatone', 'R. G. Jones Private Recordings', 'RCA Victor Home Recording Disks' and two film soundtrack discs from G. B. Kalee of Wardour Street and National Studios Ltd.

The BBC lacquer discs were represented by the wartime broadcasts already mentioned and a commentary from the Isle of Man 1958 side car race by, allegedly, Murray Walker, Snr.

This was a fascinating and often hilarious programme which Colin presented with his usual skill, good humour and enthusiasm.

The second part of the evening was devoted to 'Traditional Folk Music' on cylinder and disc by Tim Wood-Woolley.

Tim opened his talk with a brief history of the collecting of traditional English folk music in the late 19th century and the development of song in the form of a parlour ballad with piano accompaniment. The first record played was an

example of this type of arrangement on Pathe 60.741, "Of all the Airs the Wind can Blaw", sung by Ian Colquhoun, and was followed by Vaughan Williams conducting his own orchestral arrangements of "I'll Go and List for a Sailor", "A Bold Young Farmer" and "The Jolly Threshermen" from his ballet "Old King Cole", recorded in 1925 with the Vocalion Orchestra.

Real traditional music performed in a traditional style was given by three singers recorded in the field by Percy Grainger on an Edison phonograph in 1908 - a Mr. Thomas singing "Lord Bateman", George Goldthorpe performing "Horkstow Grange" and Joseph Taylor rendering "Landlord and Tenant" and "Bold Nevison". Examples of Joseph Taylor's commercial recordings for the Gramophone Company in 1908 were next played, followed by two tunes by the concertina player, William Kimber's 1946 sessions on HMV - "Laudnum Bunches" on B 9670 and "Constant Billy" on B 9669.

As an encore, Tim played a J. Scott Skinner Sterling cylinder of "Birlin Reels" and an Edison disc of a 'cod' Irish piece, "Medley of Irish Reels", played at break-neck speed by Pat. J. Scanlon.

London Correspondent

London, 20th July 1999

On this Tuesday, Members gathered in the Swedenborg Centre in Bloomsbury to enjoy Frank Andrews' presentation, "We Also Have Our Own Records", covering labels G to H. The criteria for selecting the labels will be familiar to Members through Frank's continuing series of articles of the same title in HILLDALE NEWS, but with the added attractions of both being able to hear the actual records played and of Frank's presentational skills.

The recordings ranged from Kenny Lynch sing-

ing "Cockles and Mussels" on Glenside W158 from the 1950s, through to Billy Williams performing "The Taximeter Car" on Homochord 6610, *via* a decidedly unpleasant British Union of Fascists Male Voice Choir goose-stepping through a performance of the Horst Wessel Lied, on Greater Britain Records OC.191-1 from 1935.

Interestingly, Frank played two examples of the same song, but performed by two different singers, for comparison of the quality of the singing. The first was a Globe record no. 5192b "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby" performed by W. G. Gallinan, and for comparison, the second stanza from a Gramophone Monarch record, sung by John Harrison. The second comparison test was with a Globophon recording of Moreland Dale [*! - Ed.*] singing the ballad "The Wolf", with the second part from a Peter Dawson recording. The difference in the quality of the performances in each case was so marked that they could have been two different songs.

Frank finished his presentation with the "Hunting by Ear" label, which was issued to complement a book on the subject of hunting by Michael Berry and D.W.F. Brock, and played "A Hunting Medley" by the Fodens Motor Works Band.

As always, this was a fascinating evening, well up to Frank's usual standard, and we look forward to the next instalment of "We Also Have Our Own Records".

Tim Wood-Woolley

London, 17th August 1999

On Tuesday, 17th August, Members met in Bloomsbury's Swedenborg Centre to enjoy Allan Palmer's programme of 'Scottish Folk Music'. This programme broke the mould, to some extent, for London meetings, in that the majority of the recordings were made by Allan himself at folk festivals around Scotland during the 1970s, interspersed with commercial re-

cordings from the 1950s and 1960s.

Allan took us around the regions of Scotland illustrating the particular styles of music emanating from each area. The evening opened in lively style with two reels played at breakneck pace by Sandy Coghill and Feeland Barbour, followed by the unaccompanied singer from the Borders, Hamish Henderson, in "The Boys of Callieburn", both recorded by Allan at the folk festival in Keith in June 1978, and "Bonnie Bessie Logan" sung by Davy Glen in Kinross in 1975.

Moving to the west of Scotland, Allan played "Jig o' Slurs" performed by Angus Grant and the Lochaber Ceilidh Band. This was followed by an interesting comparison with the "Eriskay Love Lilt" sung initially in Gaelic by Flora MacNeil, then a second recording of the same piece in 'art song' format, sung by Robert Wilson with orchestral accompaniment. Shetland, with its strong tradition of fiddle music, was represented by three collections of tunes played by Tom Anderson with, variously, Aly Bain, Trevor Hunter and Davie Tulloch, with Willie Johnstone on guitar, some recorded by Allan himself in Lerwick in June 1979, others from commercial recordings. The east of Scotland was represented by the ballad "Twa Recruiting Sergeants" sung by Jeannie Robertson.

In between the music, Allan provided an entertaining and well-researched commentary on not only the background to the music and the singers, but also the historical and political events surrounding the song. This came to the fore in the second part of the programme with two originating from the Jacobite Uprising - "Will Ye No' Come Back Again?" sung by June Redpath and "A Parcel of Rogues", performed by Steeleye Span.

As the evening drew to a close, the mood lightened somewhat with a selection of bawdy travellers' songs performed by Jeannie Robertson, and a number of children's songs sung by Matt McGinn and Adam McNaughton. To see us

dancing on our way home, Aly Bain and Sean Maguire fiddled us out with a selection of Irish reels and "The Masons Apron". This was an unique and highly enjoyable programme, and Allan is to be congratulated on his research, presentational and recording skills.

Tim Wood-Woolley

Midlands Group, Birmingham, 15th May 1999

This was the second meeting at our new venue, the Grimshaw Room, St. Chad's R. C. Cathedral, in Birmingham, and we were delighted to welcome Frank Andrews and Howard Martin, who had travelled from London to hear the evening's programme, presented by John Dales.

John's programme - "Entertainment Cylinders in Britain - the First Twenty Years, 1889-1909" gave us the opportunity to hear some extremely rare and possibly unique material. Owing to the fragility of the originals, the programme was presented on cassette tape, accompanied by an informative hand-out prepared by John, which outlined the evolution of Edison's 'perfected' phonograph and the arrival of a prototype at the home of Colonel Gouraud in South London.

John opened with what is believed to be the oldest extant British musical cylinder from the Edison Phonograph Company, London, 1889, entitled "Hi Tiddily Hi Ti". A cornet and piano duet, this is announced by Mrs. Mary H. Ferguson, a governess in the employ of Col. Gouraud. She announces Arthur Smith (conductor of the London Concert Orchestra) as the cornettist, and a Mr. Martin (an antecedent of Howard's, perhaps?) as the accompanist. Whilst omitting to reveal Mr. Martin's Christian name, she does however reveal that the piano is a Steinway!

This was followed by other British and American recordings from the late 1880s and early 1890s. A John Y. Atlee whistling solo from the Columbia Phonograph Company, Washington,

D.C., included in its announcement "... accompanied on the piano by Professor Gaisberg", and we also hear a Queen's Park band recording from John Lewis Young's short-lived Edison Phonograph Office of 1893.

John took us on an atmospheric musical tour of the 1890s with other fine cylinders, which included a delightful piano recording of the "Skirt Dance", a rare 1899 Pathe cylinder by Albert Chevalier, and an Edison-Bell 'London' brown wax of the Birmingham-born banjo virtuoso, Olly Oakley.

In the short time allowed him, John could only briefly scan the numerous companies involved with turn-of-the-century cylinder production. However, his final selections included - to the great mirth and amusement of all - Harry Bluff singing Gus Elen's "The New *Perjarmar* Hat" and Florrie Forde's *risque* "Piano Tuner".

Peter Dempsey

Midlands Group, Birmingham, 17th July 1999

The customary two programmes were presented on this evening. Your reporter commenced with a programme entitled "Their First Record", but qualified this title to include more variety by adding a second record by each of the seven artists or bands to be heard. These were all on 78s, and with the recording dates, were as follows -

Vesta Victoria: 24-6-1903 & 10-9-1931

Hetty King: 5-5-1909 & 26-4-1934

Paul Whiteman Orch.: 9-8-1920 & 28-2-1928

Nellie Wallace: 12-11-1920 & 28-10-1936

Ambrose Orch.: 3-4-1923 & 6-8-1935

Fred Astaire: 18-10-1923 & 17-10-1937

George Fromby, Jr.: 7-5-1926 & 3-4-1938

All but one of the 'first' recordings were made acoustically, while their later counterparts were electrical: using the Society's EMG machine, the contrast in volume and sound quality was well demonstrated. This was particularly so in the case of the two Ambrose recordings, and

those of George Formby, Jr.

After the interval, there was a change to the advertised programme, and Phil Bennett gave us a talk (again illustrated by 78s on the EMG) on "Duke Ellington - A Miscellany of his Early Recordings". With the usual careful attention to detail we have come to expect from Phil, we heard 15 recordings from early 1927 through to 1933, accompanied by a mass of information concerning Duke's musical career, both in and out of the recording studios.

Several of the pieces played featured world-famous jazz soloists, some of whom stayed in Duke's band for many years. The early recordings played, including the February 1927 "Birmingham Breakdown" and the October 1927 Victor of "Black and Tan Fantasy" featured the 'jungle sound' Duke used in his band's cabaret performances at the Cotton Club in New York.

In 1929, the management of the band was taken over by the Irving Mills Organisation, which resulted in increased recording work for the band. The band recorded for many different companies, with the most popular pieces issued as several different versions.

Another innovation of Duke's was the issue of extended versions of popular songs, which were often issued on 12-inch 78s, an example being "Creole Love Call" from February 1932.

In 1933, the Duke Ellington Orchestra toured England, and appeared before the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York at a private function. From this period, we heard the Decca recording of Duke's version of the jazz standard "Every Tub", but named "Hyde Park" and recorded in London on 13th July 1933.

Both presenters (and Richard Taylor, who had operated the EMG) received a hearty round of applause for their efforts.

Geoff Howl

Northern Group, Alston Hall, near Preston, 16th May 1999

John Astin welcomed everyone to the meeting, and gave apologies which had been received. Most of the afternoon was taken up with "Comedians of the North", with a shorter session devoted to "Recorded in Blackpool".

Amongst the comedians, we heard -

Arthur Askey, with Jack Hylton's band - "Run, Adolf, Run" on HMV

Morny Cash - "My Ninepence" on Winner
G.H. Elliot (the chocolate-coloured coon) - "Make Yourself a Happiness Pie" and "I Used to Sigh for the Silvery Moon", both on Zonophone

Gracie Fields - "Wish Me Luck" and "In the Woodshed She Said She Would" on HMV, and "Stormy Weather" from the HMV set "Gracie in the Theatre"

George Formby, Sr. - "Bits of Humour"

George Formby, Jr. - "Formby Favourites for the Forces" medley on Regal Zonophone; "They're All Going Back to Tennessee" on Dominion; and "Andy the Handy Man" on Regal

Tom Foy - "Lizzie" on a 1911 Zonophone
Will Fyffe - "Twelve and a Tanner a Bottle" on Regal

Tommy Handley - "The Disorderly Room", on two sides of a Zonophone

Charlie Higgins - "I'm a Daddy at 63" on Broadcast; and "Mother's Walking Round in Father's Trousers" on Rex

Laurel and Hardy - "The Dance of the Cuckoos" on HMV

Billy Merson - "The Photo of the Girl I left Behind Me" on Zonophone

Jack Pleasants - "I'm Shy, Mary Ellen, I'm Shy"

Al Read - "There's No Place Like Home" on HMV

Walter Greenhalgh - "The Tackler on Holiday" and "The Tackler at Home" on Broadcast

Frank Randle's only record - "The Hiker" on Regal Zonophone

Harry Weldon - "Can You Imagine Me" on Broadcast.

Recorded in Blackpool proved to be a more difficult subject, but we enjoyed what we heard, including -

Bertini & the Blackpool Tower Band - "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking" on Eclipse, and actually recorded in London;

Bertini & his Band and Reginald Dixon - "The Song of the Bells"

Reginald Dixon, at the Tower Organ - "Martial Moments (Entry of the Gladiators, Punjab, and Colonel Bogey), on Rex

Sandy Powell - "The Tram Conductor", on Broadcast

Stanley Holloway - "Three Ha'pence a Foot" (which mentions Blackpool Tower!), on Columbia.

John Mills spoke for all of us when he thanked John Astin for chairing the meeting and for all the research he had done and shared with us.

The records were all played on an HMV 101 portable, and an oak-cased HMV Model 32.

Joan Ward

Joint Meeting of the Northern and Midland Groups, Alston Hall, near Preston, 13th June 1999

The Northern Group Chairman, Miles Mallinson, welcomed the Members from both groups, pointing out that this was the fourth such meeting of the two groups, and as on previous occasions, we were to hear two programmes, one from each group.

Richard Taylor from the Midlands was the first speaker. From prepared tapes, he gave us "Jazz

in the Lakes", based upon bands who had performed at the Keswick Jazz Festival in recent years. Most of the bands Richard played were illustrated with photographs of the bands and solo musicians. Ten pieces were played -

The Ben Cohen Hot Seven - "Cake-Walking Babies From Home", recorded at Keswick in 1996. The band includes former Chris Barber and Temperance Seven band members;

Les Bull's Festival Band - "I'm Slapping Seventh Avenue with the Sole of my Shoe", a local Cumbrian band, recorded 1998;

Brian Carrick's Heritage Hall Stompers - "Cry, Baby, Cry", recorded in Keswick in 1995. Brian Carrick plays the clarinet formerly owned by the New Orleans clarinetist, George Lewis, and given to him by a member of George's family;

West Jesmond Rhythm Kings - "Sweet Emmalina", recorded in 1996 - a band which hails from the North-East, but which on this occasion included Norman Field, a well-known Midlands clarinetist;

Classic Jazz Epochs - "Pennies From Heaven", recorded in 1998 - a band which comprises two performers. One plays piano and sings, the other doubles on trombone, cornet, euphonium and bass!! They are based in Connecticut, USA, and tour schools "preaching the gospel" of their type of music.

Charleston Chasers - "Drop Me Off at Harlem", an Ellington number, recorded in 1994. The quality of this large band was outstanding, almost perfectly capturing the rich tones of the Ellington Orchestra.

Tommy Burton's Sporting House Quartet - "Saloon", recorded in 1995 - a Midlands-based band.

John Maddock's Jazzmen - "St. Philips Street Breakdown", recorded in 1995 - a band from Dorset. John Maddocks, whom Richard considers to be the best jazz clarinetist in England, played a rivetting 4 minute clarinet solo.

Phil Mason's New Orleans All Stars - "Gulf Coast Blues", recorded in 1996 - a band from the Isle of Bute.

The Ben Cohen Hot Five - "Cornet Chop Suey", recorded in 1996 - a very good re-creation of the Louis Armstrong Hot Five version.

Throughout the programme, Richard's enthusiasm for the music and the festival was evident, and as he remarked, Long May It Continue!

The second programme was given by Northern Group Member, John Hawkins, and was a marked contrast to the previous presentation, but equally enjoyable.

Using Miles' acoustic EMG machine, John gave us five examples of HMV acoustically recorded 78s, each followed by their equivalent, or near equivalent, recorded electrically.

In every instance, the acoustic versions were muffled and restricted in volume and body, while the electrical versions, as one would expect, were louder, fuller, and had much more character.

Details of what we heard were -

Peter Dawson - "The Floral Dance": an acoustic pre-1915 version and the 1927 HMV, C 1313

The Savoy Orpheans - "Two Eyes" on an acoustic HMV B 2028 from April 1925; and The Savoy Havana Band - "Naila" on an electrical HMV B 2085, from July 1925

The Mayfair Orchestra - a selection from "No, No, Nanette" on an acoustic HMV, C 1191, from June 1924; and the Light Opera Company - "Gems from 'No, No, Nanette'", on an electrical HMV C 1205, from September 1925

John McCormack - "Kathleen Mavourneen", on an acoustic HMV DB 342, from about 1911, and an electrical HMV DB 1200, from mid-1929

Sir Edward Elgar, with orchestra - "Pomp and Circumstance March no. 1" on an acoustic

HMV D 179, from about 1915, and an electrical HMV from the mid-1920s.

Some amusement was caused by the playing of the acoustic version of the Pomp and Circumstance March, which was very slow. It was scarcely believable that Elgar would have sanctioned such a performance.

John's programme was on a most entertaining and unusual theme. He is to be congratulated, not least for unearthing the different versions of the records.

We also heard the electrically recorded version of "No, No, Nanette" played on a 1924 HMV "Lumiere" table model with the pleated diaphragm. Members who had not previously heard this model were surprised at the restricted sound that it produced.

Once again, a highly successful "get-together" and very many thanks to our Northern Group organisers.

Geoff Howl

West of England Group, Totnes, 24th July 1999

West Country Members gathered in the Devon market town of Totnes, with its Saxon and Norman connections, for a two-part meeting, with the connecting theme, the 'Reproduction of Sound'.

Making the journey from Plymouth, despite a very recent spell in hospital, Joe Pengelly gave the first presentation. Using the Sousa march 'Washington Post', on Indestructible no. 997, he demonstrated that by only changing the horn on the machine, a noticeable change in the quality of sound was quite distinct.

Metal horns of 10 and 11 panels were used, also an adapted Amberola re-entrant, but the general view was that the Music Maker wooden horn gave the most satisfactory result.

In his summing up, Joe did concede that as yet, the 'Standard' ear was still to be developed, and so at the end of the day, it was left to us all to

accept which sound we thought best for our enjoyment.

Keith Badman, diaphragm specialist *par excellence*, took up the reproducing theme with a most interesting talk on his work making and repairing diaphragms of all sorts and sizes, displaying samples of mica - a mineral having a layered structure - the best quality of which was mined in India. Alas, this source is no longer available, due to Russian and Chinese manufacture of thermionic valves.

Phosphor-bronze sheeting, and samples of diaphragms and tooling used in the making of these very complex and important items were on view, and from Keith's 'Black Box' were some of the diaphragms sent to him for repair or replacement. A story of one customer who phoned to say that he had no sound from his soundbox even after making a small hole in the diaphragm made for an amusing ending to a most educating and enjoyable afternoon.

To Keith and Enid Catchpole, the West of England Group extend a most sincere thank you for your hospitality.

Tom Little

London, 20th October 1998 - late report

A veritable feast of sight and sound was the luck of London Members attending last October's meeting to hear Paul Morris, from his home and business in Exeter, give a talk on Edison disc records. Before I commence, I must mention that the near year delay to this report was due to a major computer failure, and the consequent loss of much valuable information. My apologies to Paul and the CLPGS for this very late account.

London Meetings Chairman, Howard Martin, introduced the evening. Paul showed a good selection of slides throughout, and these were accompanied by a varied and lively selection of music played on Paul's Edison Chalet disc pho-

nograph. Of the numerous Edison discs in Paul's collection, the first to be played was Arthur Middleton's "Hosanna", no. 83041, which was played to a slide showing a photo-call of Middleton taken at Edison's Fifth Avenue Studio in New York. The date Paul had for the recording was 19th May 1916.

For good measure, and supplementing the records and slides that night, Paul used his chemistry background in a demonstration of what happens when phenol is mixed with formaldehyde. In a petri dish, inspected by Members afterwards, began to develop, in its crudest form, a mini-disc size piece of Bakelite. Paul explained that it was this discovery in 1908 by Baekeland that proved to be a key to the Edison quest to manufacture a near-indestructible recording surface, and proved too, a further spur to the Edison company's decision the following year to experiment with disc recordings. The difference here was that Edison's discs were to employ the vertical-cut recording system as devised by Edison for use with cylinders from 1877, not the later lateral-cut system as commonly associated with the already well-established, and increasingly commercially rival, disc market of 1909. But, to a slide taken in about 1890, of Edison with a contemporary cylinder machine, Paul reminded the group that Edison had envisaged recording sound onto disc and other formats, not just cylinder, as early as 1878.

Apart from Edison's application of Bakelite (a chemical formulation discovered at the same time by Edison's associate Aylesworth, and which they named Condensite), there was, too, in that same period, the major *coup* of finding a method by which precision-ground polished diamond styli could be manufactured for use in Edison phonograph reproducers - the better to play all the company's vertical-cut recordings, be they on cylinder or disc. As cited by Paul, time and again, Edison proved his capacity to solve technical problems and apply practical solutions.

Despite these innovations, from the commercial launch of the discs in October 1912, phonograph and gramophone societies on both sides of the Atlantic gave the product a poor reception. Known as 'Edison Disc Records' at that time, the decision was taken to relaunch the discs in January 1914 as 'Edison Diamond Discs'. For simplicity's sake, hereafter, I shall refer to Edison's vertical-cut system as 'Diamond Discs'. The earliest brought by Paul were Daab's "William Tell (Fantasia)", no. 50030, recorded late 1912, and Bonci's "Celeste Aida", no. 83003, recorded 21st July 1913. Given the poor launch, the earlier examples seemed to me to be the more remarkable by reason of what I took to be their greater scarcity. After all, when compared to lateral-cut discs and the myriad of makes, prices and styles of machines available on which to play them, Diamond Discs and Edison disc machines were expensive, and not initially widely available, even in the USA.

To explain his dating of the discs, with the use of an overhead projector, Paul was able to show the changes which took place to the style and the extent of matrix numbering and other information, engraved into discs; the appearance of disc surface conditions; the noted appearance, or absence, of manufacturing edge mould disc 'gripper' marks; the extent of artists' credits; the design of the Edison shield motif; and the use of, and changes in style to, paper labels, which could be used only after the Edison company had found a method of incorporating these within the disc manufacturing process.

Paul also explained the Edison catalogue system. Basically, the 50xxx number series were kept for popular items, while the 80xxx series were reserved for more serious works. Clearly, "April Showers", no. 50875, a foxtrot recorded on 19th November 1921, and played on the night, falls into the first category. It was too, an early example of a paper label Diamond Disc. Introducing labels at that time, however, did little to boost flagging sales. So why did the 'Dia-

mond Disc' fail? Clearly the reasons are numerous.

Given a limited number of record presses, which alone represented expensive plant, Paul reported that a maximum of 240 discs could be manufactured per eight-hour working day, which was slow; Edison discs were heavier and thicker than lateral-cut discs; at Edison's insistence, his machines were not initially designed to play the more numerous, lateral-cut discs of rival companies; the outbreak of hostilities in Europe from August 1914 disrupted Edison's export and distribution plans there; in the USA, from 1915, there was a shortage of German-manufactured phenol, needed for the manufacture of Bakelite; in October that year, the HM Government's imposition of a 33.3% War Tax on non-essential goods into the UK further reduced the already diminutive British Diamond Disc market (with such goods being banned altogether from March 1916); following the US declaration of war in April 1917, labour and material shortages further impinged on Edison's manufacture of machines and Diamond Discs; while, throughout its trading life, the Diamond Disc repertoire was not thought to be extensive, or particularly current at times.

Paul also reported that the profit from Diamond Discs did not amount to much after 1916, and yet Edison continued to expend dollars, time and effort to improve both recording and manufacturing techniques. For example, from December 1921, disc surface quality was improved by the use of china clay in place of wood flour, while in terms of recording techniques, the Edison-designed giant recording horn at his Columbia Street studio was in use by February 1923. Tapering in its 125-foot length from some 6 feet across down to 1.5 inches, the horn was reported to be sensitive, and to produce a mellow tone. Played that night was Paul's disc of Steven's "I Love You", no. 51268, recorded 19th January 1924, and believed to have been recorded using the 125-foot giant horn. As Paul

noted, Edison's acoustic recordings were long thought to be second to none. But Edison also recorded electrically.

Of these, the earliest brought by Paul was Parker's rendition of "Broken Hearted", no. 52089, recorded on 7th September 1927. On the night, the last confirmed date Paul had for a disc was for "Little Shepherd", no. 80890, recorded on 19th April 1928, that date being within eighteen months of the demise of the Diamond Disc. Within a further eighteen months, the Columbia Street studio would be derelict, a state confirmed by a photograph from the early 1930s, which showed the already sorry state of the studio's interior by that time.

Despite commercial failure in October 1929, Edison remained convinced of the superiority of his vertical-cut recording system, a system tested more than half a century before on his first tin-foil cylinder phonograph. Finally, in support of the inventor, and in celebration of Edison's numerous technical innovations to make that format succeed, Paul concluded that the legacy of these, no less the Diamond Discs, are all, quite simply, 'Edison's Gems'. A belated thanks to Paul Morris for his enlightening and entertaining talk of that title.

John Bridger

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Letters

Das Erstes Phonographen Museum

During our touring holiday in Germany and Switzerland, we visited a wonderful Phonograph Museum containing some of the best machines I have ever seen. These included an 1878 Tinfoil machine, a Model M with battery, a manifold and many listening tubes, a Spring Motor machine, an Opera, an Idelia, a Trade Mark Gramophone and Dog, some very unusual Pathe machines, and of course, an EMG 10B oversize. The list of machines is endless, and although we spent several hours there, we did not see all there was.

If anyone is in the Black Forest or the northern part of Switzerland, I would recommend a visit. The address is -

Mandy Schneebeli
Erstes Phonographen Museum
Rathausplatz 17
CH 8260 Stein am Rhein.

The photograph shows Ann & Miles Mallinson with Mandy Schneebeli at the entrance to the museum, with the EMG.



L. Miles Mallinson; "Kunzelsau",
21 Carisbrooke Crescent, BARROW;
LA13 0HU.

The One That Did Not Get Away

After reading Ray Phillips' article on the Three That Got Away, I realised I had experienced a similar situation in February this year at our local Auction Rooms.

I was interested in a Decca Model 105 Portable. The machine was in very good condition, but the soundbox was so badly distorted that one bridle lug was twisted off. Having a spare identical soundbox and as this is not a common machine, I attended the sale the following day, with high hopes. However, the gramophone sold for £95, which even without the 10% buyer's premium, was well beyond my estimation of its value.

A few weeks ago, at the same Auction Rooms, my wife brought my attention to a case tucked under one of the tables. Imagine our surprise to find it was the same gramophone with the distorted soundbox. Being curious to learn what it sell for this time around, we attended the sale. I'll probably never know why it was up for resale, but for £22 I am now the very happy owner of the Decca 105 Portable.

Charlie Stopani; [REDACTED] Mannofield,
ABERDEEN; AB15 7RY.

'8-8-98, Maiden Lane'

Two letters in HILLANDALE NEWS, no. 226 (Summer 1999), following up Paul Cleary's account of '8-8-98', raise some interesting points which need clarification.

Firstly, the incidence of prefixes on the early London discs: Ray Parkes is correct to assume the possibility of an 'F' as there were discs from late 1898 intended for French and German markets, indicated by 'F' or 'Gy' prefixes instead of the usual 'E'. The appearance of the prefix on disc 6010 does indeed suggest the

possibility of an 'F'; unfortunately the effect might have been produced by a badly composed 'E', and it has not been possible to confirm either letter with certainty.

However, E 6002 does definitely have an 'E' prefix, in lettering raised above the disc surface (in common with other very early London discs); all this is not at all obvious from the picture in the magazine. To be quite honest the picture was reproduced so very badly that details were very difficult to see at all; a lot of time was spent to reproduce a digital scan which was so sparkingly clear that the grain of the disc surface can be seen, and it is difficult to imagine how the picture came to be virtually obliterated, as it appeared accompanying Paul's article.

[These criticisms are accepted - we are trying to ensure with the printer that image quality is maintained and improved - Ed.]

One last point about that particular matter: the old spelling 'clarinet' was in occasional use until perhaps the 1930s.

Oliver Berliner's observation that the Berliner brothers were pressing disc records in Germany from June 1898 poses several problems. All the surviving data at EMI Music Archives and in the Berliner papers at the Library of Congress suggest that the inventor sent his nephew Joe Sanders along with Fred Gaisberg to create a recording facility in London as well as a record manufacturing plant in Hannover. On this point, the key figure is Sanders. He was a trained engineer and an expert in matrix making and the manufacture of the shellac-based mixes used to make disc records. All the evidence points to Gaisberg making his first records around 8th August and Sanders producing the first Hannover records in October 1898.

In addition, there is the evidence of the discs themselves: London discs from August 1898 are commonly very similar in 'feel' to the US discs, with slightly rounded edges on a duller (but hard and fine-grained) material and with a straight grain to the back, unlike the sharper-edged but

slightly softer, later European pressings, which have a circular grain to their back surfaces.

There seems no reason for us to suppose that early London discs were not pressed in the USA, even if the Hannover factory really was manufacturing discs as early as June 1898. Indeed, letters in the EMI Music Archive show this to have been the case.

If Oliver Berliner has access to archival sources that show we have been misled by our own sources, we would be delighted to hear from him.

Dr. Peter Martland; University of Cambridge;
& Peter Adamson; St. Andrews University.

HMV Portables

Dave Cooper's reference to coloured turntable fabric in his article on HMV Portables (no. 226, Summer 1999) reminded me of a question that has puzzled me for some time. Why does everyone who restores a gramophone put green felt on the turntable?

I can't claim to be an expert, but I have owned a couple of dozen machines that still possessed their original turntable fabric, in various states of wear, and in no case was it green. I can recall Columbia machines with brown felt or blue velvet, Deccas and HMV portables with brown felt, Gilberts with brown felt, and an HMV horn model with purple felt. But nothing green.

I have recently been taking note of the fabric on other machines owned by collectors and dealers, and it seems almost a rule that if it's green, it is brand new. The only machine I can think of that possessed original green fabric was that mentioned by Dave Cooper - the green HMV 101.

I know that the CLPGS contains experts on every subject under the sun, or at least under the lid. So perhaps a reader can answer this puzzling historical question - where did all that bright green felt come from?

Nick Hiley; [REDACTED] CAMBRIDGE;
CB1 3LY.

Crown Records

Further to Frank Andrews' article (Summer 1999) regarding Crown records, I have two 9-inch Crown records: no. 100, 'Cavatina', Don Sesta & his Gaucho Orchestra (matrix H.345); no. 207, 'Souza Marches', Wingates Temperance Prize Band (matrix H.120). The labels are dark blue with a small gold crown; made in England.

These were sold by Woolworth in the 1930s. Previously Woolworth sold 8-inch Eclipse records, with a red label and gold lettering, and earlier still, a 6-inch disc, with pale green labels.

Eric Whiteway; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] EXETER; EX4 6DL.

The 1928 Schubert Centenary

Ronald Taylor's comments on my article on the 1928 Schubert Centenary (HILLANDALE NEWS, no. 225) adds some interesting information. He points out that the Merrick completion of the 'Unfinished' Symphony was on Columbia 9562/3, not 9662/3 as I had written (and you apologised for!). In fact, if apologies are in order, they should come from Compton Mackenzie for printing 9662/3 in his 'Gramophone' review of January 1929.

Due to the kind offices of Michael Smith, I have been able to hear a modern LP performance of Merrick's completion - which stands up to Schubert's movements remarkably well - and also an interview with Merrick broadcast shortly before he died.

G. W. Taylor; [REDACTED] HAR-
ROGATE; HG2 0LE.

Miscellaneous Collectables

I enjoyed Dave Cooper's article Miscellaneous Collectables, but his suggestion to use staples on Album Pockets is not a good idea, as, come

time, they rust and cause irreparable damage by staining and tearing the paper.

It is possible to use brass eyelets for use on belts, shoes, etc., which can be obtained from most Craft Shops, but again, the paper is easily torn.

Thes Album Pockets should not be turned over like the pages in a book. If the Album is set upright and the pages fanned out, as shown in Figure 1 (page 322) of his article, the records can then be removed and replaced quite easily. By allowing the records to move forward before closing the Album, they cannot be damaged.

Charlie Stopani; [REDACTED] Mannofield,
ABERDEEN; AB15 7RY.

Family Membership

With the ongoing discussions re Membership numbers and Funds, may I suggest the introduction of Family Membership, at a small extra charge? Perhaps this would help to increase both.

I am sure that many Members have others in the family who also have records and machines but are not in the Society. My wife has her own collection of records and gramophones, but shares my HILLANDALE NEWS and reference books.

We would both welcome Family Membership.

Charlie Stopani; [REDACTED] Mannofield,
ABERDEEN; AB15 7RY.

Help Wanted

Dent & Co. and Johnson Ltd.

I am researching the history of the gramophone (acoustic and electric) of the firm Dent & Co. and Johnson Ltd. They made large cabinet acoustic gramophones, for, I believe, the state rooms of liners. They also made a three-piece transportable, which consisted of a portable, amplifier, battery-powered, and large speaker. The owner, A. S. Johnson, patented an improved version of electric reproducer, and sold the patent in 1929 to The Gramophone Co.

I would be interested in any information.

John C. Porteous; [REDACTED]
IRVINE, Ayrshire; KA12 8SB.

Dictaphones

Can any readers help me with a recent addition to my collection? It is a dictaphone made by 'The Dictaphone Company Ltd.', which had its head office at Kingsway House, Kingsway, London, WC2.

It was made in about 1926 and would record onto 1-minute cylinders, if it were working! I cannot say what is missing from it, as I have no idea of what it should contain. I can certainly say, though, that it is missing a soundbox.

In appearance it is fairly good. It is painted with black enamel paint and a gold-painted band encompasses its main body. Below this band are the words 'The Dictaphone', again in gold paint. Also it has a switch on the top which says 'Listen', 'Neutral' and 'Dictate'. It also has a 5-amp socket in the back for its electrical supply. A very interesting tube is provided for speech but it is sadly missing its funnel!

The piece provides endless interest to me and if

anyone could help to repair this machine with any information at all, I would be most grateful as it would be spectacular to see it in action once again!

Colin M. Barnard; [REDACTED] EAST-BOURNE, East Sussex; BN22 8LT.

Mystery Gramophone

I would welcome any information about a gramophone I have recently acquired. It is an internal horn machine with a simple but solid oak case. There are no markings apart from the number '32' stamped into the bottom of the case. The front doors have some inlay decoration and the handles seem out of keeping with the machine. I wonder if these are modifications.

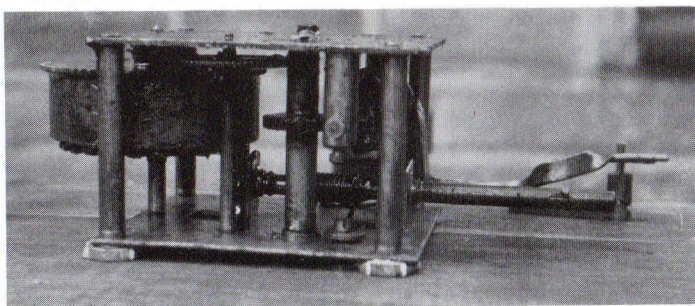
The horn is very basic, being formed of two flat, softwood side panels with the curved top and bottom panels in thick card, apparently lacquered. The motor appears to be rather basic and protrudes into the horn, so this must have been a noisy machine. There is a Bakelite rest for the tone arm but, again, this does not appear to be original and is crudely fixed. The soundbox is missing.

The machine is unfortunately in poor condition, with the top metal parts rusty and showing no signs of any former plating. The case has suffered from woodworm.

I would welcome any information on the origins of this machine, and any advice on restoring it.

J. A. Cook; [REDACTED], Owlsmoor, Berks.; GU47 0YJ.

[Photographs overleaf - Ed.]



Two photographs of Mr. Cook's gramophone

Lectures by Mr. John Sayer

I enclose a photocopy of an apparently early handbill publicising Lectures on the 'Phonograph' and the 'Microphone' given by John Sayer.

Can any of the Members enlighten me with in-

formation about the lecturer and give a date for this item.

M. Curling; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] CROWTHORNE, Berks.; RG45 6DB.

[Handbill reproduced opposite - Ed.]

→ *SPECIAL+LECTURES* ←



THE
PHONOGRAPH, OR SPEAKING MACHINE
ILLUSTRATED BY DIAGRAMS ;
AND THE
MICROPHONE, OR SOUND MAGNIFIER,
WITH EXPERIMENTS.

SYLLABUS.

First Lecture.

THE PHONOGRAPH.—Analogy between Sound and Light.—Life of MR. EDISON, the Inventor ; Description of his Laboratory.—Faber's Speaking Machine.—Detailed description of the Phonograph, with diagrams.—Probable Uses of the Instrument.

Second Lecture.

THE MICROPHONE.—Analogies.—Life of PROFESSOR HUGHES, the Inventor ; Description of the Sound Magnifying Microphone ; the Resonant Chamber of the Microphone.—Probable Uses.—Experiments.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

" Mr. John Sayer describes the construction of these instruments in a manner at once comprehensive and clear."—*Liverpool Daily Post*.

" The sound magnifying powers of the Microphone practically illustrated by Mr. J. Sayer, fully carry out all that has been said respecting it."—*Liverpool Mercury*,

" Mr. Sayer describes these instruments with great simplicity, but none the less effectively, laying down his ground work and proceeding step by step until one is thoroughly initiated into all the 'mysteries' of these really wonderful scientific inventions."—*Southport Daily News*.

" The noise created by the brushing of a feather sends 'light tremors through the pulse.' The dropping of a piece of wool is quite audible. Mr. Sayer, who exhibits the instruments, describes them with great clearness."—*Southport Visitor*.

" This was one of the most interesting and entertaining lectures, remarkably well delivered, that we have ever had the pleasure of listening to."—*Lytham Times*.

Numerous Testimonials from Private Schools express the greatest approval of this Lecture. as being full of interest and instruction for the youngest as well as the oldest pupil.

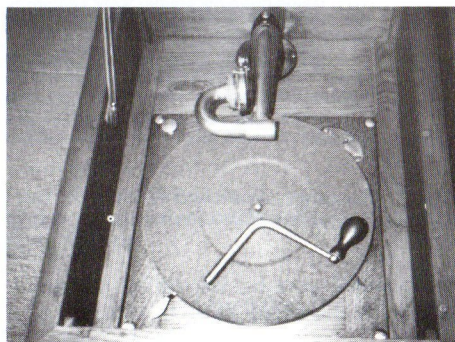
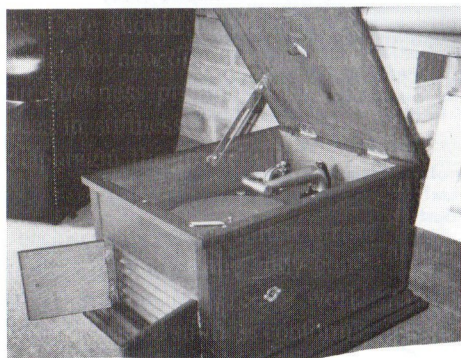
Lecturer :

Mr. John Sayer.

(Of London.)

Mystery Gramophone no. 2

Mr. Ken Priestley of Holmfirth, West Yorkshire has supplied some photographs of an unknown HMV model he has acquired. He would appreciate any information as to its pedigree. "Footprint" dimensions are 20.25 inches by 16.75 inches wide, and it stands 12.25 inches high. The motor-board is set in four inches from the top of the box. It has a US Exhibition soundbox, a 10 inch turntable, a goose-neck tone-arm, a cast double-spring motor with angled governor, and the motor is front-winding. Please phone Ken Priestley on [REDACTED] if you can throw any light on the origins of this machine.



The Federation of Recorded Music Societies and the CLPGS Web-page

As many Members will know, CLPGS is affiliated to the Federation of Recorded Music Societies, an 'umbrella' organisation which supports the work of the many local recorded music societies around the country. The current Chairman of FRMS - John Gilks - is an enthusiastic Member of CLPGS, and runs WEA and Adult Education courses on the history of the gramophone. Its President is Edward Greenfield, OBE.

Members wishing to find out more about the FRMS should contact Marjorie Williamson, Secretary, at the Registered Office, [REDACTED] KIDSGROVE, Staffordshire; ST7 4DE.

CLPGS has rejigged its Internet site as a simple statement of purpose and listing of officers, and posted it under the 'umbrella' of the Federation of Recorded Music Societies (FRMS).

Our new address is -

www.musicweb.force9.co.uk/music/frms/clpgs.htm

This, of course, is of little interest at present to existing Members, although in the fullness of time we will post meeting times, contents and the like. The chief significance of the site for now is its links to many other recorded-music-interest societies to which links have been created, so you may browse and discover further groups you may wish to join or individuals with whom you can correspond. Many thanks here go to the indefatigable Reg and Marjorie Williamson at FRMS, who did all the cajoling, resetting and link-creation. So go and get your 5-inch, single-sided diskette and ... connect to the web if you haven't already!

Help Wanted (continued)

Machine Display at Open Day

I am attempting to organise a small mechanical music event in the Thames Valley next year, and would like to hear from any Members interested in displaying a machine or related item.

In addition to belonging to the CLPGS, I am a Member of the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society, which has restored the former Great Western branch line between Cholsey and Wallingford in Oxfordshire, and operates it as a heritage steam railway. We try to give a number of our operating days a theme, and when it was discovered that several of our volunteers shared an interest in gramophones it seemed appropriate to organise an event.

Similar events based on vintage vehicles, military vehicles, railwayana collecting and aviation modelling have proved popular.

It is envisaged that the event would be fairly small, as space is limited, and aimed at introducing the casual visitor to the history of wind-up machines, as these seem to catch the public imagination. This would also be a good opportunity for the CLPGS to present itself to a different audience. If you would be interested in such an event, please contact me for further information.

John Cook; [REDACTED] Owlsmoor, Berkshire; GU47 0YJ.

Chairman's Forum

**- a new feature where Members may comment on issues raised in
Chairman's Chat**

From Mr. H. P. Bailey

Following various opinions expressed in HILLDALE NEWS, I thought I'd add my own. I fail to see why a membership list should be controversial. When I first joined CLPGS (at 10/- p.a.!) a list was issued as part of the deal - is it now a secret society? The B.S.A. society I'm in issue a list, as do others. Regarding security, my name has been in HILLDALE NEWS years and years, and I haven't even had a begging letter!

From Mr. Denis Harbour

I feel so strongly about this that I have recently ordered a set of leg irons for our three editors, and I, or four or five strong men that I yet need to recruit, will place them under close civil arrest, for they have already committed this heinous crime by printing our addresses at the foot of each letter published. This may take some considerable time as I have not yet found a blacksmith able to give me a firm quote. But we cannot just allow this kind of thing to go on.

After their ticking off by Tony Blair in person (assuming all goes well), their incarceration in the Tower on bread and water for a week or two, and their subsequent transportation to some distant land, it is to be hoped that they will feel a little subdued. But a better climate will make them energetic, and we will naturally expect them to continue their duties as editors. They will of course be forgiven eventually, and I expect most of us will start campaigning for their release (which may be a long drawn-out affair), as well as giving our permission to go ahead and publish.

It is of course, on behalf of my fellow anoraks that I am taking this rather severe action, as I myself have no objection to having my address published.

From Mr. Tim Wood-Woolley

I would like to add my thoughts to the debate which Howard Hope initiated at the AGM in Oxford, then subsequently in both the HILLDALE NEWS and in his opening address to the CLPGS 80th Anniversary programme held in London in May.

I joined the Society because it was dedicated to the preservation of, and research into, historic recordings and machines, and to be a Member of such an unique organisation would assist me in increasing my knowledge of early recording history. I accept that it was possibly not the intention of the original "founding fathers" of the Society for it to become an antiquarian organisation, but it is a fact that this is how the CLPGS has evolved over the last eighty years. What we have now, for better or for worse, is a Society with an international reputation for both the quality of its research and the individual expertise of its Members, some of whom are acknowledged world experts in their fields. I find it hard to understand why, especially as Membership appears to be growing without any substantial publicity on behalf of the Society for the past year or two, it is felt to be necessary by some, fundamentally to change the character and purpose of the Society. It is my own gut feeling, and I have no research or documentation to substantiate this, that the majority of the existing Members joined because they wanted to be part of an historical and research society dedicated to old machines and recordings, not simply to play CDs to one another. I suspect the Society may well end up alienating these existing Members if it is not very careful.

I read Steve Miller's somewhat intemperate letter in the Summer issue with increasing dismay. We are not Luddites - I for one have no problem

with CDs: in fact I have a large collection of them - but for those who are interested in CDs, DVDs, DCCs, and modern recordings generally, there are many other recorded music societies around the country which will cater for their tastes. And if you want a CD, there are dozens of magazines on the newsagents' shelves which will provide them for you. This is not what the CLPGS and HILLANDALE NEWS are about. The CLPGS and HILLANDALE NEWS are unique in that they cater exclusively for the enthusiast of recording history, of whatever taste in music and period in time. To prove that we are not stuck in some obscure time warp as Mr. Miller suggested, he would be well advised to attend one of the London Meetings which in the past year alone have featured artists such as Dionne Warwick, Anita Harris, Burl Ives, and music by Oliver Messiaen. Granted these artists are not exactly contemporary, but then I would not wish to attend gatherings which played The Spice Girls or Boyzone.

I would also take issue with the assertion made in some quarters that in 1919 the Society was at the cutting edge of recording technology and that perhaps we should return to that philosophy and embrace all the new developments which are taking place in sound recording. Looking at the Society's very first programme, it would appear that those original Members were perhaps not so forward-looking after all. The programme was exclusively on cylinder records, which by 1919 were as obsolete as LP records are today and very much the preserve of enthusiasts (or anoraks?), being played on an obsolete machine, an Edison Fireside "B", playing music of the previous, pre-war, generation. There was no Jazz featured in the first programme, nor was there any Ragtime, but what there was was "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen", the sentimental ballad "Your Dear Brown Eyes", operatic excerpts and various military marches and band selections: hardly reflecting the musical climate of 1919. So it may be fair to say that, from its very first meeting, the Society has always looked to the past in terms of machines, recordings and music and searched

for quality rather than following the latest fashions.

To comment on the perceptions of the Society by others, I am not really too bothered if these mythical outsiders do feel us to be 'anoraks' - it is merely a common insult made by air-heads against any sort of enthusiast. I consider myself to be a mature enough adult not to get over-worried about what empty-headed people think of me or my hobby. After all, would these outsiders consider football fanatics to be 'anoraks'?

Where does this leave the Society? Not very much further forward I am afraid, but I would ask the more gung-ho Members to ensure that they know what the Membership wants before instituting any radical proposals.

From Mr. Nick Hines

I have been following the various arguments being put forward with regard to the future of CLPGS. Firstly, I am quite happy to have my address and phone no. published - a thief would need a pantechicon to make any money from my collection!

Secondly, I would go to the London meetings if they were more accessible by public transport, which, from here, [*near Colchester - Ed.*] after a day's work, at present is not viable. If they were held occasionally this side of the M25 - perhaps, say, Brentwood, I would feel this to be within driving distance. I remember a few years ago, fellow Member John Gome: put a request in HILLANDALE NEWS for Members to contact him with a view to forming an East Anglian (or Essex/Suffolk) group, but I was the only one who replied. May be the situation has changed.

I realise that the Society was started as a group to discuss contemporary ideas, and I do not know when the emphasis was put on the historical element. It was certainly for Gramophones and Phonographs when I joined in 1967. It is possible that many join mainly for the magazine, as there aren't many (any?) publications on a regular basis to cover the earlier days of

home sound reproduction.

Also, there is the collection element. To cover, say, CD Players, I feel, would not, as yet, be valid, as maybe Members have one or two, but probably not the shelves-full they may have of gramophones or phonographs. However, I do not see why the 'cut-off' point or whatever one may wish to call it cannot move along, perhaps to include early vinyl players? The current market in CDs, etc., is well catered for, with What Hi-Fi?, Hi-Fi News, etc. Maybe modern transfers may sound better, but I think most machine collectors probably just like to feel they are preserving a bit of the past for the future.

As for the musical content, I am sure most collections are of that person's own particular tastes. I write as a record collector primarily, and much as I enjoy working on the old machines, I do not use them on an everyday basis, to conserve them and prevent excessive damage to the records. I play the records electrically. However, I have to admit I find it a little difficult to understand how one could collect the machines if you didn't enjoy some of the items on them.

I am particularly pleased to see Dave Cooper's articles on the 101s, etc., as if we are to attract and keep new Members, it would be logical to cover the machines beginners are more likely to discover.

From Mr. William McKnight Toner

I was delighted to see in HILLANDALE NEWS, no. 226, both Editors' Desk and Chairman's Chat discussing the possible provision of a Membership List. Although a relatively new Member (15 years) I have raised this matter on several occasions, most recently in some detail in my letter published in issue no. 217. Until reading Mr. Hope's column, I had quite forgotten privacy still existed. I am shamefully ignorant of the niceties of the Data Protection Act, but a glance through my unsolicited mail reveals that the only people in the UK unaware of my existence are my fellow CLPGS Members. I could

incidentally, more than satisfy the demand for replacement EMG horns by recycling unsolicited mail.

I have however, noticed a growing tendency in HILLANDALE NEWS to append the full names and addresses to Members' letters, but I hope this will not deter some Members from writing any more than they might decline to attend Society meetings without donning a ski mask. As there seems no impediment to publishing full names and addresses in this context, the matter of a Membership List has now been resolved for at least one Member, as my desire for a list was not mere idle curiosity but to provide a means whereby one might establish contact with other Members living locally. If like-minded Members resident in South-West Scotland were to pen a few lines on any reasonable pretext (preferably gramophonic) we can with a little editorial indulgence look forward to a bumper issue of HILLANDALE NEWS [*Comment: No comment! - Ed.*] from which we can compile our own local Membership List, bearing in mind there are only some 25 Members in the whole of Scotland.

From Mr. Alan Sheppard

'Chairman's Chat' and 'Chairman's Chat, continued' in issue 226 certainly gave me much food for thought. Whilst early machines will always be of some interest to many Society Members, especially those who can remember using them out of necessity (my youthful days in rural Gloucestershire were spent in a house which remained without electricity until well after World War II), there are others, self included, who applaud the fact that cherished performances can be more conveniently heard through transfers to tape or CD. When a cylinder or 78 rpm record is heard, by whatever means, one knows that what one hears is the sound of the actual performance rather than a modern stitched-up amalgam of 'best bits'. The reality of the performance comes across, no matter what the carrying source and the Society must surely embrace all developments in

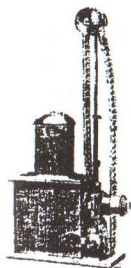
reproduction methods.

The last year or so has seen the demise of two publications which contained much material of interest to those of us who enjoy listening to music made in the first half of the 20th century - Stuart Upton's very personal VLMS magazine died with him, and Jade Wrigley felt he could no longer produce his admirable 'Historic Record'. One must also feel uneasy about the future of trusty old 'Gramophone' which began to lose its way following the proliferation of rather down-market competitors and has now wandered off into new ownership with goodness knows what consequences. The CLPGS must not be allowed to drift into lethargy and extinction.

Publication of Society Members' names, locations (towns only, perhaps) and interests might turn out to be something of a curate's egg but the good parts would, I think, outweigh the bad. It would also help the Society discover exactly what makes each Member tick. More contributions from Members might then be encouraged. One last thought: if upto 70% of Members live in the South-East, why is the Phonofair held in Northampton? Do I recall that once (only once?) it took place in Brighton?

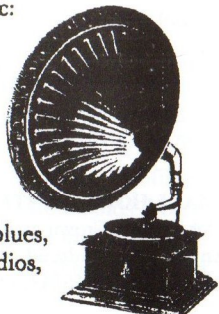
The Chairman has also received a number of letters from American readers on the Membership List question, generally favourable to publication.

The Clockwork Music Group



Mechanical music:

gramophones,
phonographs,
barrel organs,
organolas,
music boxes,
magic lanterns,
vintage records,
music hall, jazz, blues,
opera, vintage radios,
ephemera.



we are a group of enthusiasts who meet about 4 times a year at the Discovery Museum, Blandford St., Newcastle (What was the Science & Engineering Museum). Our interests are wide and among others include:

When we tried to form a group in the 1970s, I contacted the local Members - about 4 responded (out of a possible 8). So, I raked together various other people, expanded our interests to mechanical music, etc. Since then we've carried on with four meetings a year, usually with a talk or recital. We get an average of 12 people, most of whom collect or at least own a few talking machines, together with allied things, e.g., musical boxes, organettes.

Naturally, we have an interest in local culture, as preserved on wax and shellac.

If there's anyone out there, do come along. The next meeting is December 18th: Derek Greenacre will give a traditional Victorian Magic Lantern Show, with hand-painted and early mass-manufactured glass lantern slides, projected from an authentic lantern.

Phil Bailey

catalogue with red borders, dated 1907. Lavish production, featuring Operatic, Speech and Instrumental artists who recorded for the Fonotipia label. Biographical text in Italian, large photographs and listings of recordings available. Issued as item BD-42, cost of £12: per copy plus postage.

COLUMBIA 10" RECORDS - Frank Andrews. Re-print for 1999. The original 300-odd pages of information are augmented with a further 22 pages of corrections, bound in. Coloured laminated thin card covers and taped spine. Issued as item BD-28, cost of £28-00 per copy plus postage.

COLUMBIA 10" RECORDS UPDATE. The 22-page update is published separately for Society Members who have already purchased publication BD-28. Presented in a clear A4 plastic folder, suitable for either slipping into the publication, or transferring the information over, as required. Issued as item CL-31, cost of £2-50 per copy plus postage.

IMPERIAL RECORDS 1929. A wonderful miscellany of Popular and Classical titles drawn from diverse British, American and Continental sources. Issued as item CL-32, cost of £2-00 per copy plus postage.

CATALOGUE OF EDISON 4-MINUTE WAX AMBEROL CYLINDER RECORDS; Volume 2 - British Issues, 1909-1912 (Second (Revised) Edition, 1974). Copies of the original publication compiled by the late Sydney Carter. Issued as item CL-33, cost of £3-00 per copy plus postage.

Re-print of Record Lists for BERLINER DISCS. British issues for November 16th, 1898; February 22nd, 1899 and June 1900;; single German & French lists + American for February 22nd, 1899. Issued as item

CL-34, cost of £2-00 per copy plus postage.

ZONOPHONE RECORDS - Frank Andrews. The definitive list of all the single faced records issued by this company in the 5", 7", 10" and 12" sizes. Listing includes the earlier Prescott discs which were initially carried prior to takeover, then numerically, all sections of vocal, instrumental and band/orchestral. Also additional Hebrew, French, German and Italian language sections. Comprehensive index, with additional contemporary illustrations taken from the "Sound Wave". With the kind assistance of EMI, we have been given permission to illustrate in colour some 14 variations of labels, many examples actually from their archive, used during this period. Issued in A4 size, 184 pages of text, coloured soft laminated cover. Publication distributed after 25th June 1999. Issued as item BD-44, cost of £24-00 per copy plus postage.

ANTIQUE PHONOGRAPH Gadgets, Gizmos & Gimmicks - Fabrizio & Paul. 228 pages of text and coloured photographs; hardback. 9" x 11¼" with coloured dust jacket. Companion book to the "Talking Machines". See review by Joe Pengelly in this issue for further details. Issued as item BD-45, cost of £39-95 per copy plus postage.

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